

WILD BLEAK BOHEMIA: MARCUS CLARKE, ADAM LINDSAY GORDON AND HENRY KENDALL: A DOCUMENTARY by Michael Wilding

For a brief fourteen months the three great originals of Australian writing – Marcus Clarke, Adam Lindsay Gordon and Henry Kendall – were together in Melbourne. Fellow members of the Yorick club, they lived the Bohemian life. And paid for it.

‘The mornings were spent in scribbling, the afternoons in tobacco, the evenings in dinner, theatre and gaslight. I fear we did not lead virtuous lives,’ Marcus Clarke recalled.

Then Gordon shot himself the day after *Bush Ballads* was published, too broke to pay the printer, Kendall returned to Sydney, forged a cheque and escaped gaol only by being sent to a mental hospital, and Clarke headed for the first of his two bankruptcies.

Assembling contemporary newspaper reports, court records, published memoirs and recollections, and private letters and diaries, Michael Wilding has produced a compelling documentary account of these three troubled geniuses. Meticulously researched, with the facts allowed to speak for themselves, *Wild Bleak Bohemia* is a definitive group biography, extending backwards and forwards in time from the Melbourne years to Gordon’s early days in South Australia and Kendall’s life in New South Wales.

Love and death, debt and madness, alcohol and opiates, horse-racing and theatre, newspapers and magazines, books and libraries are the recurrent background. The narrative tells of the tragic deaths of Gordon’s and Kendall’s infant daughters; the serious horse-riding accidents of Gordon and Clarke; Kendall’s plunge into alcoholism; Gordon and Kendall’s opiate addiction; Clarke’s experiments with hashish; Kendall’s separation from his wife and disappearance on the NSW Central Coast; Gordon’s three-fold steeple-chasing win on the same day.

Unforgettable characters include Captain Standish who leaves England under an assumed name to avoid gambling debts and becomes Chief Commissioner of Police; Father Tenison Woods who befriends Gordon and recruits Mary MacKillop; Clarke’s friend Drummond who claims a snake-bite antidote a fraud, gets himself bitten, and dies; Kendall’s friend Supple who tries to assassinate a politician and kills a bystander; circus performer William Trainor who has himself buried in the next grave to Gordon’s; actor Walter Montgomery who shoots his horse on leaving Australia and shoots himself two days after getting married; Irish nationalist politician gaoled by the English, Gavan Duffy, who advises Clarke on revising *His Natural Life*; Henry Parkes the father of Federation who lends Kendall money and appoints him Inspector of Forests; Gordon’s doctor James Murray whose blackbirding expedition murders seventy Solomon islanders; Castieau the prison governor who takes a Turkish bath with Clarke; Sir Redmond Barry who sentences Ned Kelly to death and dies twelve days after Kelly is hanged; and many more.

It was very much a man’s world, but an important women’s perspective is provided with the memoirs of Gordon’s wife Maggie, his cousin Frances, his first love Jane Bridges, and his friends in South Australia, Elizabeth Lauder and Mrs Lord; the observations of Clara Aspinall, Annie Baxter Dawbin, Georgiana McCrae, Margaret Whitworth, Geraldine Jewsbury, Lady Charlotte Jackson and Frances Cashel Hoey; the letters of Charlotte Kendall, Harriet Gordon, Rose Lewis; and vignettes of Marian Clarke, Polly Castieau, and Mary MacKillop.

‘Mention of the Yorick Club called up many memories of the darkest period of my life. I left Melbourne with the shadow of insanity on me,’ wrote Henry Kendall. ‘In that wild bleak Bohemia south of the Murray, I went through Gethsemane and I am only the grey shadow of the young man who commenced to write with so much enthusiasm in 1861.’

WILD BLEAK BOHEMIA
Marcus Clarke, Adam Lindsay Gordon and Henry Kendall
A Documentary

Also by Michael Wilding

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Heart Matters (with Peter Corris)

WILD BLEAK BOHEMIA

Marcus Clarke, Adam Lindsay Gordon and Henry Kendall
a documentary

by

Michael Wilding

Australian Scholarly Publishing, Melbourne

ISBN 978192 5003802

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First published 2014 by

Australian Scholarly Publishing Pty Ltd

7 Lt Lothian St Nth, North Melbourne, Vic 3051

Tel: 03 9329 6963

enquiry@scholarly.info / www.scholarly.info

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To Laurie Hergenhan



On St Valentine's Day, 14 February 1867, the twenty-one-year-old Marcus Clarke wrote from Ledcourt Station in the Wimmera district of Western Victoria to his former school friend in England, Cyril Hopkins.

'You see that I am here yet, but I shall not be here next month. Where I shall go to is at present, with several other matters, "in the womb of time." "Tonight my heart is light, no dirge will I upraise," as Edgar Allan Poe says. My uncle is going to England upon his pension after next Christmas and wants me to go with him. I shall not go however; for I see nothing to be done at home and don't care, after choosing of my own accord to come out here, to return and confess that I have done no good by coming ...'

'An interval of several months elapsed before I received another letter from him,' Cyril recalled some forty years later in his biography of Clarke. 'When, at length one reached me, it bore the Melbourne postmark and was written on paper headed *Argus* Office. It ran as follows:

'My dear Cyril,

'Don't start at the address! I am now on the staff of *The Argus*, our chief paper here. I have just received your letters – about five in a bundle and must state reasons for not replying before.

'In the first place I have been three months up in the bush. In the second I have been down with ague-fever and all sorts of disorders. To explain: I left Holt's place and went up with five more fellows on an expedition to Queensland. I need not detail all the miserable failures. Suffice it to say that we lost about three hundred pounds each; that our horses died and our cattle were drowned by floods, that fever set in and that we were all taken ill. One poor devil, the Hungarian, Max Kabat, died and was buried in the bush. I reached Adelaide in rags and, after waiting some time, got some money remitted and came up to town.

'The *Argus* people were in want of a theatrical critic and I accepted the post at a salary of three hundred a year. The life is well enough but at the end of the year I intend to come home and go in for authorship. I am sick of the bush and the colonies ... They want to keep me but I don't believe in staying ... People say that I look ten years older after this infernal Queensland business. I feel a hundred! ... I am afraid that this is a most stupid letter but I am not "i" the vein" ... I am so unwell and shaken that I cannot settle to anything and have to grind out my literary work at the cost of nervous tissue!...

'Write to me by every mail! You have no idea how your letters cheer me up! ... What a life I have had! Bank clerk, gold buyer, squatter, overlander, play writer, author and man of means! Share buyer and speculator too! *Vive la bagatelle!* If I had only saved the money I have made! Lord, what fools these mortals be!

'P.S. The enclosed are criticisms and reviews cut out at random; the "Balzac" and "Doré" are the only things worth a rap in a literary sense.'

Marcus Clarke was born on 24 April 1846 at 11 Leonard Place, Kensington. He was an only child. His mother, he wrote to Cyril, died when he was three years old. Her death certificate

records: 'Amelia Elizabeth Clarke. Age: 26 years. Date: 13 March 1850. Place: 23 Notting Hill Terrace, Kensington. Cause of death: phthisis certified.' Phthisis was tuberculosis. At a later date he lived at 49 Gloucester Place, London, according to the address he wrote in his copy of Dryden's *Virgil*, now in the State Library of Victoria.

He was educated at Highgate School where he was a close friend of Cyril Hopkins and Cyril's elder brother Gerard Manley Hopkins. Hamilton Mackinnon, who knew Clarke over a fifteen year period in Australia, and wrote his biography in the 1884 *Marcus Clarke Memorial Volume*, quotes from a notebook with Gerard's description of the young Clarke: 'a kaleidoscopic, particoloured, harlequinesque, thaumatropic being.'

When Clarke was sixteen, his father was taken ill. 'Poor Clarke is on the voyage out to Australia, his father having met with a paralysis of the brain,' Gerard wrote to Ernest Hartley Coleridge, grandson of the poet, on 22 March 1863. Clarke was packed off to Australia. His father lingered on. His death certificate declares: 'William Hislop Clarke. Age: 56 years. Profession: Barrister at Law. Date: 1 December 1863. Place: Northumberland House Lunatic Asylum. Cause of death: softening of the brain, several years certified. District: Stoke Newington, County of Middlesex.'

His father's second brother, James Langton Clarke, had emigrated to Victoria in 1855, setting up as a barrister in Little Collins Street, Melbourne. Since 1858 he had been a judge of the Court of Mines and of the County Court at Mount Ararat in Victoria. His father's eldest brother, Sir Andrew Clarke, had been Governor of Western Australia from February 1846 till his death just a year later. Sir Andrew's son, also called Andrew, born in 1824, was commissioned in the Royal Engineers, and in 1846 posted to Van Diemen's Land where he was private secretary to Governor Denison for six years. In 1852 was appointed the first Surveyor-General and Chief Commissioner of Crown Lands for Victoria, and member of parliament for Emerald Hill, positions he held until his return to England in 1858.

Andrew had been brought up in part by Marcus's father and uncle James while his own father was absent abroad on military duties, R. H. Vetch records in the *Life of Lieut.-General The Hon. Sir Andrew Clarke*. Andrew corresponded regularly with Marcus's father from Australia. Vetch adds: 'When his uncle's health suddenly broke down, Andrew Clarke sent his uncle's only son Marcus out to Australia at his own expense and gave him a start in life.'

Marcus left from Plymouth on 16 March 1863. He arrived in Melbourne on 7 June, and promptly disappeared. Ian McLaren quotes documents preserved in the Melbourne Savage Club, in which, 10 June, Clarke's uncle James sent a telegram to Captain Standish, Chief Commissioner of Police: 'Marcus Andrew Clarke my nephew aged seventeen arrived by *Wellesley* from London on Sunday. Mr Lamoile, Criterion Hotel, St Kilda promised to go on board for him. Have heard nothing from either of them though I telegraphed Mr Lamoile yesterday. As he had three hundred pounds (£300) something may have happened to him. I am anxious to know if he is safe. Langton Clarke, Judge.'

The Chief Commissioner put out a memo to Superintendent Nicolson the same day: 'For immediate inquiry. Shd any information be procured this evening, I wish it to be sent to my

private residence. Frederick Standish, C.C.P.’ The following day Nicolson sent a memo for immediate delivery: ‘The young man Marcus Andrew Clarke arrived at the Criterion Hotel last night with his luggage, and a letter to that effect was forwarded to Judge Clarke from the landlord by last night’s post. M. A. Clarke left the hotel about noon today, having been invited out to dine.’

In his diary Captain Standish recorded dining with Judge Clarke over the years. Standish turns up from time to time in the following pages.



Judge Clarke was entrusted with looking after the young Marcus. Annie Baxter Dawbin records in her diary seeing ‘Judge Clarke and his nephew’ at the opera for a performance of *Le Prophète*, 26 June 1864.

Henry Gyles Turner recalled in Turner and Sutherland’s *The Development of Australian Literature* in 1898: ‘When his limited cash resources were at an end, his uncle sought to start him on the road to earn his own living, and through the good offices of his friend, David Macarthur, then superintendent of the Bank of Australasia, he procured him a probationary appointment.’ Turner was born in Kensington in 1831, son of a tailor from Worcester. Educated at Poland Street Boys’ Academy, he was apprenticed to the bookseller and publisher William Pickering in 1845, then joined the London Joint-Stock Bank in 1850. In 1854 he emigrated to Melbourne, and in 1864 at the age of 33 he had become chief accountant in the Bank of Australasia. Like Marcus, he had literary aspirations.

In the *Melbourne Review* in 1882 Turner described Marcus at work at the bank: ‘He hated methodical book-keeping, and a column of figures was a weariness of flesh that would depress him for a whole day; he made the most ludicrous mistakes, and could never be got to realize the paramount importance of exact accuracy in pass-books or official returns. But, if he failed to satisfy the authorities, he was the life and soul of the office during his brief novitiate. With a ready faculty of easy versification, he was continually delighting his brother clerks with burlesque ballads and heroic verse upon the topics of the house, in which he satirized his companions or lampooned the ruling officials with equal indifference and daring. It came to be recognized in the office that a man who could write off tragic passages from Æschylus in the original, or turn some commonplace joke of the moment into excellent Horatian verse, ought not to be expected to write up pass-books; and so, rather than see Pegasus in harness, every clerk’s hand was ready to help him at his work.’

A correspondent in the *South Australian Register*, 14 January 1885, recalled: ‘I remember poor Marcus Clarke when he was in the Bank of Australasia, in which institution I was a clerk at the time. When he entered upon his duties as correspondence clerk we noticed and at the time greatly admired the celerity with which he dispatched his business. Marcus was about the smartest man we had met in that department, and punctually as the clock struck four he would take up his hat and depart. This was all very well for a few days, and our admiration and reverence for this prince

of correspondents daily increased. He would answer a letter which would take an ordinary man half an hour in composition in the space of five minutes, and he looked so happy and serene over the matter that we felt the duty was a downright pleasure to him. But it only lasted about three days, and then our little delusion vanished. We had a fearful time in that bank for weeks after. Every morning the manager, who was rather a pompous old gentleman, and very exacting in matters of business, would ask for the pleasure of Mr Clarke's company in his private room for a few minutes. And daily the old gentleman's voice became more and more severe, and we would sometimes catch a glimpse of him with a letter in his hand, his face red as a turkeycock's, and apparently ready to go off in a fit of apoplexy. The fact was that the new correspondence clerk had answered the letters in a manner peculiarly his own, and had not trammelled his communications with much of the usual business etiquette or attention to accuracy. After the bank had been duly threatened with legal actions, and had been abused up hill and down dale, the manager one morning brought matters to a crisis, and gently suggested to Mr Clarke that the bank would not view his resignation with any deep-seated regret – that it would, in fact, be glad to meet his wishes in that respect. "Resignation," said Marcus. "Certainly. Just my opinion. Give me a piece of paper;" and, without waiting further, he seized half a sheet of note-paper that lay upon the table, and hurriedly scribbled a very characteristic resignation; whilst the manager, completely knocked off his perch at his summary way of dealing with the question, sat back in his chair, speechless at his clerk's cool conduct. When the scribble was completed the writer handed it in, marched out, took up his hat, dusted it, and strolled pleasantly from the bank humming an operatic tune. Thus ended Marcus Clarke's connection with the bank.'

Hamilton Mackinnon records Clarke's farewell encounter with the manager of the bank.

Clarke: 'I have come to ask, sir, whether you received my application for a few weeks' leave of absence.'

The Manager: 'I have, Mr Clarke.'

Clarke: 'Will you grant it to me, sir?'

The Manager: 'Certainly, Mr Clarke, and a longer leave, if you desire it.'

Clarke: 'I feel very much obliged, sir. How long may I extend it to, sir?'

The Manager: 'Indefinitely Mr Clarke, if you do not object!'

Clarke gave his own account in an essay 'On Business Men': 'The manager sent for me, said that he loved me as his own brother, and that I wore the neatest waistcoats he had ever seen, but that my genius was evidently fettered in a bank. Here was a quarter's salary in advance, he had no fault to find – quite the reverse – but – but – well, in short, I was not a Business Man.'

Gerard Manley Hopkins' *Journals* contain an address for Marcus, as 'Hislop Clarke, c/- the Bank of Australasia, Melbourne' in a diary of 1864. But there is no record of any correspondence between them. Gerard had no fond recollections of his time at school, writing to Richard Watson Dixon years later, 5 October 1878: 'The truth is I had no love for my schooldays, and wished to banish the remembrance of them, even, I am ashamed to say, to the degree of neglecting some people who had been very kind to me.' Clarke seems to have been one of those he neglected.

Clarke's feelings about Highgate School were similar to Gerard's. Gerard's brother Cyril recalled of Clarke: 'He never professed to be very happy at school nor to have any particular affection for the majority of his schoolfellows.' Cyril is the only schoolfellow with whom Clarke is known to have maintained a correspondence. Clarke wrote on 'Speech Days and School Days' in *The Australasian*, 28 December 1867: 'The happiest days of one's life one's school days? A thousand times no. I could tell such tales – but no, calm yourself, reader, I will restrain myself.'



Clarke was now sent jackarooing in western Victoria where Judge Clarke had an interest in two sheep stations. Swinton, managed by Joseph Holt, was on the plains of the Dunmunkle Creek, a tributary of the Wimmera. The adjacent Ledcourt, managed by his brother John Holt, rose up into the Grampians.

Arthur Patchett Martin wrote of Clarke's time there in 'An Australian Novelist' in *Temple Bar* in 1884: 'It is said that Mr Holt, the squatter, used to tell how he debauched the unsophisticated minds of his boundary-riders, by reading to them the too realistic pages of the great Balzac. He was in the habit of propounding theories as to the proprietorship of land resembling those of Mr Henry George, and which, it must be confessed, were not calculated to make those rude sons of toil contented with their lot.'

John Wallace, the Glenorchy postmaster, an occupation he combined with shoe-repairing, told Hamilton Mackinnon: 'He was, moreover, an omnivorous reader, getting all the best English magazines and endless French novels from Melbourne regularly.'

Clarke portrays Wallace in his story 'An Up-country Township', characterizing him as 'Mr Rapersole, the boot-maker and correspondent of the *Quartzborough Chronicle*': 'There was a post-office in Bullocktown, kept, if a post-office can be kept, by Mr Rapersole aforesaid, who was regarded as quite a literary genius by the bullock-drivers. Mr R. "corresponded for the paper" – the paper – and would loftily crush anybody who gave him cause of offence.'

A quarter of a century later Wallace corresponded for the paper again with a series of reminiscences in the *Stawell Times*. C. E. Sayers reprinted some in his history of Stawell, *Shepherd's Gold*. Wallace gave a description of John Holt, 18 September 1889: 'a plain, quiet man dressed in orthodox style, Panama hat, trousers and jumper: rode a good horse, carried a heavy stock whip and usually had a couple of kangaroo dogs with him.'

9 April 1890 Wallace recalled Clarke: 'Marcus was hot-tempered and passionate. The bullock driver at Swinton was a fair hand at ordinary objurations, but he stood appalled when Marcus began, after a quarrel with John Holt. It was such a queer medley of names of the heathen mythology and obsolete English phrases common enough in the time of Shakespeare, Ben Jonson and other dramatists, and modern smutty language intermixed ... During the latter part of his time at Swinton very strained relations existed between him and Joseph Holt, so much so that Marcus instead of enjoying his leisure after supper on the station would walk to Glenorchy two miles and seek solace at one or other of the hotels, sometimes at the Glenorchy or the Royal, more often at

the Royal Mail where at that time W. B. Pine was the landlord and a party could always be mustered there to play cards or relate yarns of which Pine had an infinite variety ... Marcus was a poor financier in those days, and managed always to outrun the constable, but then his credit was good and soon as he received his allowance from his uncle, Judge Clarke, he went round and squared his accounts. Judge Clarke was very fond and proud of his nephew ... After about a year's residence at Swinton Mr John Holt took Marcus to Ledcourt as an overseer there, where his long lonely rides through mountains and forest fostered poetic sentiments such as he has portrayed in "Pretty Dick" and other writings. His experiences at Ledcourt were beneficial to him in after life as an author. He had a two-roomed cottage and a Chinaman to cook for him ...'

Another contemporary provided Mackinnon with further information: 'From one who was a companion of his on the station at the time, viz., that most popular sportsman and genial, generous, good fellow, Donald Wallace, I have learned that though Clarke wrote almost every night he kept the product of his labour to himself.'

By March 1866 Clarke had begun publishing the product of his labour in the *Australian Monthly Magazine*, which had been established the previous September. Clarke contributed under both his own name, and as Mark Scrivener. The pseudonym was the invention of Gerard Manley Hopkins. Cyril Hopkins recalled: 'Whilst at school Marcus kept an album in which my brother inserted a paragraph describing a certain Marcus Scrivener (his nickname for Clarke adopted by the latter as a *nom de plume*).' The only thing in life he cared about, Clarke wrote to Cyril, was to 'become favourably known as an author'.

Clarke wrote to Cyril: 'I am glad, on the whole, I came out. One gets such an immense amount of humbug forced out of one by the force-pump of society here. I used to consider myself quite a small demigod in comparison with the natives but I have found out that there is a vast deal to be done before I can cry quits even with a Colonial ... I, you may remember, was always an effeminate looking, spoilt-boy sort of a fellow, and I am afraid am so still; but a certain amount of hare-brainedness (to coin a word) and *penchant* for devilry have carried me through.'

One skill he developed was horsemanship, often riding considerable distances. He told Cyril: 'I myself, who am but a poor horseman compared to some, can pick up my hat from the ground at full gallop ... I can also jump on and off my horse at full gallop.' He described how these feats were performed, adding: 'You may fancy I am boasting of my horsemanship. These things are considered nothing here.'

For a while he considered taking up land and becoming a squatter. However, Cyril remarks 'he had begun to feel he was not adapted to the pursuit of sheep-farming'. Captain Standish then offered Clarke the chance of an alternative, joining the mounted police. Cyril quotes a letter Clarke wrote to him about the offer: 'But though the billet is a good one I should have to go to some infernal hole on the border and perhaps get shot by some old "lag"! ... I may perhaps accept it. Heaven knows! ... You must not confuse the mounted troopers with the home police; they are quite another kind of cattle. The inspectors and superintendents are all gentlemen, most of them old army men, and a troop is not by any means to be despised. One gets a house, a servant and four horses free; and in the non-settled districts is pretty well "monarch of all one surveys."

‘Captain Standish, the chief, was in the Royal Horse Artillery and is a friend of my people at home. His offer is rather a compliment than otherwise. But there will be no station quarters, no comfortable escort duty, no government balls for me. I expect that I shall have to go “high up,” and may possibly even have the “Black Police” ... Needs must, however, when the old gentleman drives! I often wonder how my life will end; the beginning of it is strange enough, God knows! What a change from all my old plans and hopes; the Foreign Office, jollity, good society, hunters, crack balls and diplomacy!’

The mounted police over the years attracted a number of literary types, including the poets Richard Horne and Adam Lindsay Gordon, and the journalist and novelist George Walstab, all of whom Clarke came to know. Henry Kingsley was reputed to have enlisted, though this has been questioned.

Clara Aspinall recorded in *Three Years in Melbourne*: ‘There are many men of good family out in the colony, holding some of the best appointments in Victoria. The Chief Commissioner of Police is Captain Standish, a member of the ancient family of that name in Lancashire.’ Paul de Serville devotes a chapter of *Pounds and Pedigrees* to Standish’s career. Standish was a friend of Marcus’s cousin Andrew Clarke, who was the same age. Born in 1824, a younger son, Standish entered the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich, in 1840, at the same time as Andrew Clarke. He was commissioned second lieutenant in the Royal Artillery in 1843 and for a while was aide in waiting at Dublin castle. In 1852 he left England under an assumed name, Francis C. Selwyn, to avoid gambling debts, and spent a couple of years on the Victorian goldfields, prospecting unsuccessfully, and running a ginger beer establishment which supplied sly grog.

There may have been a personal motive behind Captain Standish’s offer to Marcus, the reciprocation of a favour done to him some years earlier. When he first re-encountered Andrew Clarke in Australia, Standish was at very low ebb, impoverished, unemployed, desperate. Standish recorded in his diary how, 12 October 1853, they talked ‘over old times at the RMA’. 23 January 1854 Standish stayed the night at Merri Creek, Andrew’s house, where they ‘indulged in most pleasing reminiscences of the old days at Woolwich’. Standish had ‘a shakedown in the drawing room’ and ‘a jolly large tub’ the next morning. Andrew promised to urge his claims and successfully assisted him to become Assistant Commissioner at Bendigo. It was a crucial stepping stone. In 1855 Standish was appointed Protector of the Chinese at Bendigo, and in 1857 Warden of the Gold Fields at Sandhurst. The following year he rose even higher. In *The People’s Force: A History of the Victoria Police* (1986) Robert Haldane quotes Standish’s diary, 20 August 1858: ‘Heard about 4.30 that I had just been appointed by the Executive to the C.C. of Police.’ He was now Chief Commissioner of Police in Victoria, a position he held until 1880. While at Bendigo, de Serville notes, Standish, although born into a Roman Catholic family, became a Freemason. Andrew Clarke may have been an influence here. In his *History of the Continent of Australia & the Island of Tasmania* (1877) Marcus Clarke records that Andrew Clarke had been appointed grand master of the English Constitution of the Melbourne Freemasons in 1857. Standish became Provincial Grand Master of Victoria in 1861.

Standish noted in his diary that 27 December 1865 he dined with Judge Clarke ‘and his nephew’, and that Marcus was one of five men he dined with 16 March 1866. In his 1865 account of ‘A Day in Melbourne’ that he sent to Cyril Hopkins, Clarke describes two men playing billiards at the Port Phillip Club Hotel: ‘One is Captain L’Encrier, the Chief Commissioner of Police, and the other is a rich squatter from the Western District. The Captain can beat him easily; see how he plays with him.’ *Encrier* was French for inkwell – also known as a standish.

‘I believe,’ Clara Aspinall remarked, ‘that Standish was one of those who “stand high in public opinion.”’ Perhaps her brother, Butler Cole Aspinall, had not imparted the information to her that he gave to the journalist James Smith, who recorded in his diary, now in the Mitchell Library: ‘Captain Standish – my informant adds – is furnished with a report every morning of the number and the names of those who have spent the night in the better class of brothels. The record must be a curious one and calculated to lift the veil from the secret immoralities of many of the outwardly moral and respectable.’ Paul de Serville adds in *Pounds and Pedigrees*: ‘In evidence which was suppressed, the parliamentary committee of inquiry into the police force heard an allegation that Standish had given a dinner at which the women present were naked and their chairs were covered in black velvet the better to show off the whiteness of their skin.’

In *Recollections of a Victorian Police Officer* John Sadleir summed up Standish: ‘His short service previously in the Royal Artillery did not seem to have left its mark upon him, for he showed few evidences of military training. He belonged to a high-class English county family, had received a liberal education, and possessed many natural gifts that might have placed him in a higher position in public respect and favour than he ever reached. He was a man of wider views than his immediate predecessor and of fairer judgement. I doubt, however, whether he possessed as high a sense of duty. He was too much a man of pleasure to devote himself seriously to the work of his office, and his love of pleasure led him to form intimacies with some officers of like mind, and to think less of others who were much more worthy of regard.’

In his history of the Victoria Racing Club John Pacini quotes from Standish’s obituary: ‘He loved to gamble and lost a good deal of money ... It would be no exaggeration to say he was among the most knowledgeable and experienced racing men in Australia. Some years before becoming a foundation member of the VRC at Creswick’s inaugural meeting he had been very much a driving force in the old Victoria Turf Club, one of the two racing clubs the VRC absorbed. The Melbourne Cup was entirely his idea. He had held almost every post there was to hold in the VRC – Committeeman, Handicapper, Steward, Treasurer and finally Chairman to say nothing of being the Club’s most skilful race and programme framer.’ The VRC runs the annual Standish Handicap in his honour to this day.



At the beginning of 1867, John Holt was visited by his friend Dr Robert Lewins, who had been staff-surgeon major to General Chute during the Maori wars in New Zealand, and was now on his way back to England. ‘A learned though daring thinker of the Tyndall and Huxley school of

philosophers,' Mackinnon describes him. Lewins befriended Marcus: 'Rapidly a mutual feeling of admiration and regard sprung up between the young literary enthusiast of twenty-one and the learned medico of sixty ... Dr Lewins, on his return to Melbourne, told Mr Lachlan Mackinnon, one of the proprietors of *The Argus*, with whom he was acquainted, of his discovery, advising him to secure the unknown genius for his journal. Mr Mackinnon, having a high appreciation for the opinion of Dr Lewins, followed the advice without hesitation.' Hamilton Mackinnon, who tells the story, was the nephew of *The Argus* proprietor.

Marcus had returned to Melbourne by June 1867 and was soon firmly launched on his literary career. As well as being on the staff of the daily *Argus* he contributed to their associated weekly magazine, *The Australasian*.

The Argus began publication in 1849 with liberal sympathies, but after the Eureka uprising it became the conservative paper associated with the squatters' interests. Its current editor was Frederick William Haddon. Born in Croydon in 1839, Haddon had been recruited in London by two proprietors of *The Argus*, Edward Wilson and Mackinnon, and arrived in Melbourne in December 1863, the same year as Clarke. He was appointed foundation co-editor of *The Australasian* when it began publication on 1 October 1864, and from 1865 was the sole editor. 1 January 1867 he was appointed editor of *The Argus*.

Alexander Sutherland writes of *The Australasian* in *Victoria and its Metropolis*, comparing it with *The Leader*, the weekly companion to the more progressive *Age*: 'It made itself more distinctly a literary organ than *The Leader*, and soon attained an acknowledged position as the chief literary authority in Australia, occupying in regard to the colonies somewhat the same position as that occupied by the *Spectator* and *Athenæum* in England.' De Serville describes it as 'very much the clubman's paper' in *Pounds and Pedigrees*. Adam Lindsay Gordon and Henry Kendall began publishing there in 1866, Clarke in 1867. It provided a regular venue for their work. *The Australasian* continued publication until 1946, when it was reconstituted as *The Australasian Post*, which survived until January 2002.

It was in *The Australasian* that the two articles Clarke sent to Cyril Hopkins appeared, 'Balzac and Modern French Literature' on 3 August 1867 and 'Popular Art and Gustave Doré' on 28 September. They drew on a couple of his enthusiasms. The Catalogue of Clarke's library lists the forty-volume collected edition of Balzac's *Comédie humaine* (1842–48), and *Les Contes Drolatiques* illustrated with 2000 engravings by Gustave Doré, and, also illustrated by Doré, *Historical Cartoons*, Dante's *Inferno*, *The History of Croque Mitaine, or the Chivalric Times of Charlemagne* and *The Fables of La Fontaine*. In letters to Cyril, Clarke wrote of reading Balzac's *Eugenie Grandet*, *Gobseck*, *La recherche de l'absolu* and *Le père Goriot* and in his writings he refers to *La Peau de Chagrin*, *La Fausse Maitresse* and *Le Succube*. The journalist Bland sighs 'with lost illusions' in Clarke's first novel, *Long Odds*.

Balzac, Clarke's favourite novelist, provided him with an awful warning about the literary life, and he followed it to the letter. He wrote of Balzac: 'The struggle for fame and bread killed him. The pages of his finest works are written with his life-blood. To the easy-going *dilettante* author

who thinks to stop into fame and name without an effort, the life of Balzac will seem terrible. It was one long struggle with debt and difficulty.'

Clarke soon attracted notice with his report of 'The Melbourne Spring Meeting' in *The Argus*, 4 November 1867, focussing on the crowd rather than the horses: 'Young ladies, oily as to their hair, pulpy as to their lips, and heavy as to their noses, were alternately watching the course and casting stolen glances of admiration at the magnificent attire of Anonyma. Anonyma and her sisters were not in force on Saturday. It is the fashion to assign to these unfortunates a much more prominent position in all merrymakings than they really occupy ... Round the judge's corner the ladies mustered in throngs, the "Nymphs of Solyma" being in the ascendant, and the air was darkened with the shadow of the noses of the daughters of Judah.'

This, Mackinnon recalls, 'created quite a sensation, and brought down upon *The Argus* an indignant howl from the Jewish residents of Melbourne ... The matter however was explained away as an editorial oversight, and so the indignant race was satisfied and the writer censured, but not dismissed, as, although of little value as a reporter, he was invaluable as a writer.'

The article has been adduced to argue that Clarke was anti-Semitic. Nonetheless at this early stage of his career he was sharing accommodation with Alfred Telo who became a lifelong friend, and is generally said to have been Jewish.

Mackinnon remarks: 'Telo was a widely-read man in a variety of tongues, being master of most of the European languages, including Russian, from which country he was understood to have originally come, although this was, even to his friends, greatly a conjecture, as he was, in keeping with his Semitic descent, always very reticent about the subject.'

A correspondent in *The Bulletin*, Fuimus, recalled, 27 April 1901: 'Alfred Telo was born at Archangel, in Russia. His father was a wealthy merchant, and afterwards moved to Liverpool. In early life Telo was an attaché with one of the British Embassies on the Continent; later on, he became a lieutenant in a Prussian regiment of Guards, from which he retired owing to having had one of his thighs badly broken in a fall. He was dead-lame all his life, and his gait was quite a marked feature of his personality. Of Hebrew extraction possibly; but even at that, neither Spanish by birth nor descent.'

Clarke describes these early years in his obituary of Telo in *The Leader*, 11 October 1879: 'Alfred Telo was the first literary man whose acquaintance I made in Melbourne, and we lived in chambers together. I had just abandoned the elegant occupation of working overseer on a station in the mallee at £40 a year and "my tucker," for the scarcely less cheerful situation of reporter on a Melbourne daily at 30 shillings a week. Alfred Telo lived over a sewing machine shop in Collins Street, the proud possessor of a suite of three rooms. I flung my 30 shillings a week into the ménage, and sent my modest trunk into the back attic.'

The £300 a year that Clarke told Cyril Hopkins he was earning is almost four times the salary he gives here. Perhaps when he became a theatre critic and a columnist he earned more.

Clarke recalled of Telo: 'As a matter of course the wildest legends were afloat concerning the man of mystery. He had been a Russian spy. He had been a diplomatic agent. He had lived at St Cloud. He had worked in the mines. He had been a courier. He had been the husband of a

countess ... He had a habit of stroking his beard, of winking, of playing a sort of fantastic *moro* with flashing fingers (*digitos micantes*) in the air, while you hung upon his lips for a reply. He never began a sentence without apologizing for the end of it, and would relate an anecdote calculated to make your hair stand on end in a succession of fragments, which had to be afterwards pieced together like a Chinese puzzle. "Look here – of course – the Queen of Spain – I don't mean to say – as I told Cortchakoff – not that I intend – murdered in his bed – that is – you understand – Well, Palmerston – I mean to say – but, however," and so on.'

In 'Cannabis Indica' in the *Colonial Monthly*, February 1868, Clarke described something of the chambers they shared: 'The room is oblong, with two windows fronting the street; the door is opposite to the windows. A fire-place, with mantelshelf and looking-glass is at one end of the chamber, and a bookcase at the other. Over the looking-glass is a mezzotint engraving of an Italian monk, the face being of a strange and startlingly lifelike nature. A large engraving of Martin's "Palace of Satan" occupies the place of honour over the bookcase, and on each side are two engravings, after Holbein, descriptive of the entrance of Death among a party of revellers, and Death tolling a bell in a church tower. On one side of the fireplace is a writing table loaded with books and papers, and on the wall above it hangs a chromolithograph of one of Birket Foster's woodland pieces. On the wall, fronting the windows, is another low bookcase, with two Art Union Parian statues, one a bust, "Clyte," the other "The Dancing Girl." Above them is a water-colour picture, by Cattermole, of a party of Breton peasants riding by the sea shore. On the mantelshelf is a French clock, surmounted by a statue of the Indian Bacchus, in bronze, and a sea piece hangs between the windows. A table in the centre of the room was covered with books, among which I noticed *Les Contes Drolatiques* of Balzac, Montaigne's *Essays* translated by Hazlitt, Doré's *Dante*, several numbers of the *Journal Amusant*, some *Saturday Reviews*, and an illustrated edition of Keats.'



Adam Lindsay Gordon's father Captain Adam Durnford Gordon, was born in Worcester in 1796, and entered the army. He served in Barbados and with the Bengal Cavalry of the East India company. He married his first cousin Harriet, daughter of Robert Gordon, Governor of Berbice, at Paris in 1829 and in 1831 they went to live at Fayal in the Azores. Adam Lindsay Gordon was born there, 19 October 1833. He was the only son, and three of his four sisters died young. Harriet inherited a considerable income from her father's West Indian plantations, until the abolition of slavery in 1833 removed the source of wealth. Edith Humphris in her biography of the poet notes that 'both were grandchildren of a prosperous wine-merchant, Robert Gordon, Laird of Hallhead and Esslemont and his wife the Lady Henrietta (born Gordon), daughter of the second Earl of Aberdeen and granddaughter of the second Duke of Gordon, while their pedigree went right back to the cruel and notorious Edom o' Gordon of the old ballad.'

In 1840 the Gordons settled in Cheltenham and in 1846 Captain Gordon took up a position at the newly founded Cheltenham College as a teacher of Hindustani. Cheltenham had been founded

to cater for the sons of Army officers; the teaching of Hindustani, the *lingua franca* of northern India, was to educate them for military careers in the sub-continent. Later, Patrick White was to be a pupil there. Alexander Sutherland writes in Turner and Sutherland's *The Development of Australian Literature*: 'Mrs Gordon showed signs of mental aberration; melancholia of a mild religious form had marked her its victim. Her doctors advised a change of climate.' For the rest of her life she travelled around Europe, occasionally returning to England.

Cheltenham was the home of steeplechase racing and Gordon developed an enthusiasm for the sport. He also developed an unreciprocated romance with Jane Bridges, a 'farmer's daughter' as his father contemptuously put it from Worcestershire. Gordon writes to his Worcester friend Charley Walker: 'I was breakfasting with the Governor when a row began in a curious way rather. I'll relate it.

"You don't seem in a mood for breakfast this morning," says he, when I refused some eggs and ham.

"Not much," says I, "you ought to have seen me a week or so ago, eating cochin china eggs."

"Was that when you stopped a week in the country?" says he.

'I stared at him a bit and said yes.

"You'd got a good-looking lady to make tea perhaps," says he in his sarcastic manner.

'I was a bit surprised, but keeping cool assured him, as he was so inquisitive, that he was right or thereabouts.

"Ah," said he in the same tone, "I suppose that was the farmer's daughter your uncle says you've been hanging after."

'This pulled me up and I felt myself getting a little warm, partly with surprise and partly with annoyance, however, I made answer in this form.

"I don't know," says I, "what gammon my uncle may have swallowed, but at all events she's better than your precious son-in-law that is to be. I think," I said, "you've studied my sister's interests nicely by letting her have her way."

"Well," said he, with his usual coolness, "I suppose I'm to thank you for a daughter-in-law soon of another stamp."

"Never you fear, Governor," says I, speaking loud as I do when I get angry, "you may make your mind at rest on that score, for a damned good reason why, even supposing I wanted her, she wouldn't have me, tho' I am the Honble. Capt. Gordon's son, so," says I, "write and thank her for it. You ought to be much obliged to her, if I'm not!"

'And I walked out and shut the door.

'It put the old boy in such a rage that next opportunity he set to to abuse me about a bill which came in for me, and gave him an excuse, and we had an awful row – worse luck to it.'



Gordon was then at his third, and last, school. He seems to have been removed summarily from all of them. He had been enrolled at Cheltenham College 1841-2, and at the Royal Military

College, Woolwich, 1848–51. In 1852 he attended the Royal Grammar School, Worcester for eighteen months, living at his uncle Robert Cumming Hamilton Gordon's house, 8 Green Hill Place, London Road, Worcester, some twenty miles from Cheltenham.

And now occurred the event of the steeplechase which, Alexander Sutherland wrote of Gordon in the *Melbourne Review* in 1883, 'compelled him to leave the country'.

Mrs Elizabeth A. Lauder, who as a young girl, Annie Bright, knew Gordon in the 1860s, told *The Record*, 25 June 1910: 'the following is absolutely true, being told by himself to the Bright family. He was attending a military college and often took part in amateur race meetings. On one occasion he was first favourite, and his colleagues (or many of them), were backing his mount; but as the day drew nigh the horse's owner gave orders that the animal was not to be taken out of the stable. Young Gordon was disappointed and rather for his friends' sake, and listening to unwise counsel, went to the stable, took the horse, rode, and won the race, only to find the owner and a policeman watching for him as he dismounted after passing the winning post. It was with some difficulty his father kept him from the clutches of the law, but it ended in Gordon being sent out to South Australia.'

It is generally agreed that the event took place when Gordon was at the Royal Grammar School, Worcester, not the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich. In 'Adam Lindsay Gordon. Some Early Memories', *The Argus* reported, 2 March 1912, on a lecture by Douglas Sladen: 'With regard to the circumstances under which Gordon left England, Mr Sladen says that statements hitherto accepted require modification, as he has learned from Gordon's cousin, Miss Frances Gordon, who knew him better than anyone else, because he stayed a great deal with her father, at Worcester, and he lived with his own father for a long period in Worcester, quite close to her father's house. "She tells me," (proceeds Mr Sladen) "that it is a mistake to think that Lindsay Gordon went to Australia in disgrace. His family had no wish for him to go. He went because he was a courageous, romantic, and adventurous young man, whose mind was inflamed with the stories of the great gold rush. He said, as it were, to himself, 'Australia is the place for me.'"'

Sladen then concluded: 'The Lalla Rookh episode is believed to have happened at Worcester. The Plough Inn is selected as the place into which Gordon broke to take the mare to ride in a steeplechase, which he is understood to have won. The accepted account is that he had paid £5 to the owner to be allowed to ride it in that steeplechase, but that the owner owed £30, and, his creditor having obtained an execution for the money, a lock was put on the door of the stable, and the horse handed over to the bailiff. As Gordon had paid his £5, he did not see why he should not ride the horse. It is said that Gordon's father had to pay so much for quashing the proceedings that he packed Gordon out to Australia, in his wrath, or to appease the wrath of his wife. Now, if proceedings had been begun, no amount of money could have bought over the court, and the horse's value would be enhanced by winning the race. In any case, we have Miss Frances Gordon's authority for the fact that her cousin Lindsay was never in disgrace with his family. She says that his father was rather proud of his escapades, except that they involved him in expenses which he could not afford.'

In *Adam Lindsay Gordon and his Friends in England and Australia* Edith Humphris and Douglas Sladen cite Frances Gordon's recollection that 'I can remember myself that his father was rather proud of his breaking into the stable and thrashing the ostler'. Humphris and Sladen name the horse Lalla Rookh, while citing the 1852 *Steeplechase Calendar* in which it was often entered as Louisa. They cite the *Calendar* for 11 May, commenting 'this was the time Gordon stole her out of the stable': 'at *Worcestershire Hunt Meeting*, Crowle won a 4 miles steeplechase. Entered and ridden by Mr Walker. 5 ran.'

But what the horse was called, and whether ridden by Gordon or Walker, and whether the sheriff, the police or the owner were waiting at the finishing post, remains impossible to establish from the enigmatic report in *Berrow's Worcester Journal*, 12 May 1852: 'The gallant master of the Worcestershire hounds, anxious to make a demonstration at the termination of the Hunt, and also to afford some sport in his immediate neighbourhood, caused a gathering yesterday on the Crowle estate and immediately opposite his mansion, by having amateur steeplechases, which proved extremely gratifying to parties living in the vicinity, and also to many of the citizens of Worcester, who attended. Three good races were the result, over a course comprising about three miles of fair hunting country. For the first of these five horses started, for the second seven, and for the third, five. Horses were entered in fictitious, and the riders rode under assumed names, so we may be excused from entering into a detailed statement of winners or losers.'

Gordon wrote to Charley Walker about the decision to send him away: 'I've had some talk with the Governor, and seriously he means packing me off in a month if he can, but I'm not quite sure I mean going. *Don't tell anyone of this or I shall have no peace*, he had a letter from the India House, and I shall not be able to get an appointment in India for a long time. I suppose he thinks I can't be kept quiet here, and he's about right. It will be the best thing I've no doubt, and I don't dislike the idea. I long to begin the world afresh as it were ... The Governor has got an offer of an appointment as officer in (what should you think?) the Mounted Police in Australia, devilish good pay, a horse, three suits of regimentals yearly and lots of grub, for me of course, I don't mean for himself, and he wants me to take it. I think I shall, in fact it's no use mincing the matter, I know *I must*, but I must do something before I start to make my friends remember me, rob somebody or something equally notorious.'

A later letter to Charley details the arrangements: 'While I was having my tea in the kitchen the Governor came downstairs and we had some talk. I asked if he'd taken my passage, and told him I was ready to go and the sooner the better, adding that there was no good shivering on the brink when one plunge would make it over. He was very pleased to hear me speak so, and said that he had the best letters of introduction possible for me, one to the Governor of Adelaide and one to General Campbell, also to Dundee and Ashwin, and he added that I should have a first-rate outfit and that he would lodge some money in the Adelaide bank for me, and concluded by saying that whatever I wanted before I went I could have, and what money I liked. I drew a long breath as he went out, and felt for a moment that choking sensation of sorrow which a man experiences when he knows all the hopes he's cherished are scattered and blighted for ever; you know the sensation, perhaps, Charley, when one feels as if the air one breathed in was like liquid lead, but I

swallowed it somehow, and turning away from the remains of my meal, gave vent to a long whistle and lit my pipe. The Governor will be jolly glad to get rid of me, for though he's really fond enough of me he can't bear to see me going on so, a bye-word in the family, as he expressed it. He said once he'd sooner see me in my grave, and I don't know but what I felt much the same thing myself sometimes. But it's a great blessing to be able to get away from such localities and societies as I've frequented, and I have little to care about leaving *now*, to say nothing of the extreme minuteness of the loss I shall be to society; doubtless a few duns will make a passing inquiry after my welfare, but except by them there's no one whose exit will be felt so little. I'm tolerably jolly on the whole at the prospect, for I shall come back in two years and sooner if I dislike the place; directly our affairs get a bit settled the Governor says I can come back.'



Many years later Jane Bridges wrote to J. Howlett-Ross, who published her letter in *The Adam Lindsay Gordon Memorial Volume*, edited by Edward A. Vidler: 'I see no reason why the simple story of his pure and boyish love should be left untold forever, as there is nothing in it dishonouring to either of us, and when I have told you all about it you will see that shyness and reserve formed part of his character before he had experienced the vicissitudes of his Australian life. He was introduced into our farm home by my brother one day on his way from hunting; my father, who was a genial man, told him to call again when he came that way. He took to calling frequently, the ride over being only five miles ...'

The farm was at Broughton Hackett, and still stands.

'He was less shy with my sister than with other girls, and openly expressed his admiration of her personal appearance, and used to say that at Holyoake's dance, though the youngest, she was by far the handsomest girl in the room. He was continually quarrelling and making friends with her, and I really thought he loved her a little ... She was only fifteen years old; he and I were eighteen and nineteen, or a little more. I considered myself very womanly. He always brought his grievances to me, and seemed to listen to, and act upon, my advice; all his caricatures and verses came to me first and he brought me an excellent full-length caricature of himself, which I had for many years with several others.

'We were all surprised and sorry when we heard that Lindsay was going to Australia. He was very depressed, and certainly evinced no sign of having "gold fever."

Jane went on to tell how 'one morning (either on the day he left Worcester or the preceding one) I was just dressed for a drive with my father, when I was told that Mr Gordon wished to see me. When I entered the room in which he was he did not come forward to greet me nor speak, and I stood looking inquiringly at him. After what seemed a long time he said abruptly: "I came to say good-bye."

'I told him I was very sorry, as we all were, to lose him; we all liked him so much.

'Then he said without looking up, "If you will say one word, I won't go."

'I asked him what word?

‘He replied, “Stay.”

‘Then he told me in short sentences how he would work; he would do whatever his father required of him; be whatever he wished; that he never intended to tell me “he loved me,” but now “he could not help it.”

Quite unprepared for this, Jane could not think what to say. But when Gordon misinterpreted her silence and came towards her ‘I told him to wait a moment; that I could not say one word to deceive him; that I must confess to him what I had scarcely owned to myself; that I loved another.

‘I said, “Keep my secret, as I will keep yours.”

He replied, “I have no secret. I told Charlie; my sister, too, knows. *I told my mother, and that is why I am being sent off.*”

‘I asked why he had so carefully concealed from me what he had told others.

‘He said. “Because I feared you would ridicule me, or shun me, or both.”

‘I told him I would have written to his mother and assured her she had nothing to fear from me; that “even now it is not too late.”

‘He said, “Now I know what you have told me, it is all over with me; I may as well be in Australia as anywhere else.”

‘During our conversation he had been turning a silver pen-holder from one hand to the other. When I offered him my hand he placed the pen in it, asking me to write to him. I hesitated to take the gift, or to promise.

‘He said, “I will not deceive myself; send me a few lines as a friend, now and then; take the pen to remind you of me.” Seeing that I was agitated, he said, “I have been a selfish fool to distress you; forgive me.” He covered my hands with kisses, the first and last he ever gave me. So our love-making began and ended in a few brief moments, though the course of our lives was changed for ever by it.’



4 August, 1853 Gordon wrote in ‘To My Sister’:

My parents bid me cross the flood,
My kindred frowned at me:
They say I have belied my blood,
And stained my pedigree.

7 August 1853, aged nineteen, he left England on the barque *Julia*.

I shed no tears at quitting home,
Nor will I shed them now!

he wrote in ‘An Exile’s Farewell’ in a lady’s album on board. Years later the owner of the album happened to read Arthur Patchett Martin’s article on Gordon in *Temple Bar*, February 1884. It was the first she knew of the young man’s later poetic career, and she sent the poem to Martin who published it in *Temple Bar* that April.

The story often told by his biographers is that when Gordon arrived in South Australia, 14 November, he made no use of the letters of introduction he carried. Indeed, there is a story that he threw them overboard before the ship docked and three days later, rejecting his family background, chose to enlist as a trooper, rather than an officer, in the Mounted Police. But the truth is different. In 'The Friend of Charley Walker' Brian Elliott printed some letters of Gordon's to Charley from Adelaide: 'Some friends of my father's who have good standing here received me on my arrival and treated me with every kindness. I often go and see them now in the evenings.'

A letter from A. C. Ashwin in the W. Park Low papers in the State Library of South Australia recalls: 'Gordon and my father (A. J. Ashwin) were school fellows in Cheltenham, England, and when Gordon landed in Adelaide my father met him and brought him to our home in North Adelaide to live with us, which he did until he joined the police force. I can remember when he was a Mounted Trooper schooling police horses to jump fences, and when he used to come to see my parents I can remember seeing him jump the white picket gate into the yard and jump out again when leaving.'

The Advertiser, 21 October 1933, published a letter Gordon's father wrote to Ashwin, 3 March 1854: 'I cannot deny myself the pleasure of sending the thanks of Mrs Gordon and myself for your very great kindness to our son, Lindsay, on his arrival among you. He tells us how kind you and your brother were, and how pleasant you made his first acquaintance with your Dominion. Your kindness could hardly have been better bestowed, for he is one of the most careless and helpless of God's creatures, but, I hope, neither devoid of intelligence nor of high spirits, and should occasion require will prove a gallant defender of your prosperous community. His pleasant expression, "I feel myself as lively as a kitten" makes one long to be among you.'

Gordon applied to join the Mounted Police, 17 November, and 24 November, ten days after his arrival, was accepted.

He wrote to Charley from the Mounted Constables Barracks: 'We have an easy billet of it here, whether a man likes a position depends more on himself than anyone but we have fine times of it really. The Mounted Police are all well mounted and well armed in a sort of undress cavalry uniform and they are armed with carbines, pistols and long dragoon swords. I was very near getting an inspectorship or captaincy but the rules compel a man properly speaking to serve as a trooper, many of our young fellows are gentlemen though not all and capital fellows some of them are, but talk about roughing it here, why Charley I've roughed it more along with you than half these colonial chaps have ever done. In this climate anyone can sleep in the open and in spite of the heat any man can work, at least I can, better than at home as the air is as clear and fresh that if you perspire as I do profusely you do not feel the heat.'

In 'Adam Lindsay Gordon: A Small Discovery' Brian Elliott notes how Alexander Tolmer, who became Chief Commissioner of Police, recalled Gordon in his *Reminiscences of an Adventurous and Chequered Career at Home and at the Antipodes*: 'I well remember when he first arrived in Adelaide ... He applied to me for the post of inspector of Mounted Police, and, in support of his application submitted a number of very flattering testimonials, which I forwarded

to the Government, strongly recommending him for one of the district inspectorships about to be created; but the Government rejected his application. Upon intimating his ill success, I advised him to join as a trooper (unless he had something better in view), which he accordingly did, and shortly afterwards volunteered to act as my groom on account of having taken an extraordinary liking to my horse.'

In *The Australasian*, 14 July 1906, Owen Meylett recorded some recollections of Gordon from Tolmer's son, Horace: 'He was very dark complexioned, and wore a small dark moustache. He was very reserved and was always known as "Mysterious Gordon." When he first joined the police he had a large wooden box which he always kept locked. One day the men in barracks, who had long speculated as to what it might contain, found it unlocked. It was half-full of racing paraphernalia, top-boots, saddles, martingales, training horse-clothing, whips, racing colours, etc. It was soon discovered that he was a splendid cross-country rider. He used to take a magnificent bay horse named Saunders out to the inspector's house at Norwood. The men always turned out to see him start, for he invariably went straight as the crow flies over five or six fences. The inspector was accustomed to inquire what had heated the horse, and Gordon's answer was that "he had been a bit fretful." Gordon was very unsociable, had no chums amongst the men, and hardly ever talked.'

Edwin Gordon Blackmore recalled in *The Age*, 3 June 1899: 'My old friend, the late George Hamilton, was chief inspector of the troopers, and resided in the barracks on North Terrace in those days. He had about the finest weight carrying horse, for power, substance and quality combined, I ever saw. Being a capital artist, a really good water colour portrait of this horse, his own handiwork, hung over the mantelpiece in his sitting room. He told me he used to send Gordon out to exercise him, and he could never understand how it was the horse always returned to stables looking as if he had been doing strong work. The fact was, as he afterwards learned, that no sooner were the horse and rider clear of the town than they had a go cross country, for which the very sparsely settled suburbs afforded excellent opportunities. It was all good honest timber in those days. The curse of wire had not fallen upon the land.'

Gordon wrote to Charley Walker: 'I hope to get out in the country when I get my uniform and horse. I now ride the inspector's horse for him and take him up to his house about two miles out in the country in the morning ditto fetch him back at night he is called one of the best nags in the colony and is a useful kind of nag but a bolter having run away with several chaps who have ridden him of course he has not with me and I have discovered that he is a very clever fencer so I always take a short cut to our inspector's, sometimes I have to take the under inspector's horse too and sometimes the commissioner's too making three at a time. Then I ride one and lead the other two but this rarely happens. I have only been a short time in the force but am getting on well. I drink very little though I smoke a good deal. We get good pay and live like fighting cocks. I am in better health than I ever was before. Regular meals and good rest, on board ship, with the stoppage of dissipations made me quite fat and a few days exercise after landing set me quite straight I feel now like a new man and am besides turned as steady as a judge comparatively. I have qualified myself in the corps as a fairish rider. The chaps out here ride in a rough way but

not well and I have an offer of a mount in the hurdle race which comes off at the Summer Meeting the 29th of December. I do not know if I shall accept, but probably I may.'

¶

November 1854 Gordon described something of his work to Charley Walker: 'I am tired tonight as I have been watching a prisoner lately. We have no cells at the station, which is, in fact, only a settler's hut, and my handcuffs would not go on his wrists. I apprehended him on a warrant for horse-stealing, but I do not think the charge can be proved though it is clear enough. He is a rough customer, a fighting man, and as strong as a bullock, but men out here are not scientific fighters, and he is rather shy of me. He was bouncing when I first took him, and on arriving at the station here I showed him an old pair of boxing gloves and he put them on. We set to and I proved a bit too long in the reach for him; in a rally, the last round he caught me in the body, the only fair blow I got, and nearly stopped my breath, but I took him at the same instant between the eyes a right-hander with all my strength and floored him. I have the reputation of a good man about here, but more by *hearsay and report* than anything else, though I did polish off one chap well, but most of these rough bushmen are so horrid, strong and heavy that it requires all the efforts of superior science and determination to beat them.'

He concluded: 'We have a jolly life rather out here. When at home we are our own masters and can lounge and smoke or make ourselves tidy and ride about at leisure, and when going round the country you have only to fancy yourself a moss trooper of the olden time and your situation is quite romantic.'

Gordon was based principally at Penola, near the Victorian border. The Penola Police Journal survives and records his duties there in 1855. Around this time Gordon met Edward Bright, Ned of 'The Sick Stockrider' according to Humphris and Sladen: 'He and his brother John, author of a little book of poems called *Wattle Blossoms and Wild Flowers*, and his sister, Mrs E. A. Lauder, were among Gordon's first intimate friends in South Australia.' Humphris and Sladen print Edward's poem 'In Affectionate Memory of Adam Lindsay Gordon'. His sister told them: 'Gordon came over to our parts cattle-hunting and the swamps where he got lost and camped alone at our creek, Reddick, Beelish, South Australia, where he was a dear friend of ours for many years. My late father was a drill sergeant whom Gordon knew at home. So our home was a house of comfort to him – we all loved poetry and our beautiful bush; but we left that part without seeing poor Gordon. I left a letter in our tree we called our post office, but I don't suppose he ever got it. By a piece of poetry I read in *The Australasian*, I found out he was dead and no one here knew where he was buried until I found his dear baby's grave at Ballarat, and his at Brighton.'

Another friend, William Trainor, recalled in the *Bendigo Advertiser*, June 1908: 'I came from America with Burton's circus in 1856 and we gave a performance at Penola. Being the "star" rider in the crowd, I was going to ride the "changeable" act. I don't know whether you've seen it. It is where a clown is thrown off a horse; a drunken man then enters the ring: that was me. I was ordered out by the ringmaster, who said I was not fit to ride. He then bundled me out of the ring.'

Just as he did so the sergeant of the police, who was standing outside the ring, caught hold of me by the back of the neck. I had a muffler on, and he nearly choked me. It was a beautiful moonlight night. I can see it as plainly as I can see today. The sergeant took me along the road, and we met another policeman.

‘The sergeant said to him, “Lock this man up.”

‘He then let me go, and the other man took charge of me.

‘I said, “I beg your pardon, but I am one of the performers.”

‘He wouldn’t believe me, and only laughed.

““Oh, I know all about that,” he said.

‘But then I unbuttoned my coat, and showed him my riding costume, and spangles, and all that, and I said “Look here, you must let me go back.”

‘Well, if I live a hundred years I will never forget it. He was a tall fellow, and he stood upright, threw his head back, and started to laugh out loud. He then took me back to the tent and let me go. That was my introduction to Gordon though I didn’t know him till afterward. Then we went horse-breaking together, and became very friendly. I don’t know why he took to me, because we were as opposite as the two poles in ability.’

Gordon gave Trainor the manuscript of ‘Verses inspired by “My Old Black Pipe”’, in which Trainor is mentioned. Cuthbert Fetherstonhaugh calls Trainor Gordon’s ‘most intimate friend.’ The friendship was a strong one. Not only did Trainor name his first born child Adam Lindsay Gordon Trainor, he purchased the adjoining grave to Gordon’s in Brighton cemetery, so that he could be buried beside him. His death notice in *The Age*, 4 June 1917, after listing his family members, declared, ‘intimate friend of the late Adam Lindsay Gordon’. Back in England Charley Walker likewise named his son Lindsay. Gordon paid his own tribute, naming a horse Walker.

Trainor’s recollection may be inaccurate as to dates in saying he arrived in 1856, since Gordon had resigned from the police the previous year. George C. Scott, a fellow trooper, recalled the circumstances in the *Adelaide Register*, 30 November 1912: ‘The police inspector (the late Mr G. B. Scot, afterwards Government Resident in the Northern Territory) lived at Penola, and one day asked for his horse, which was in the police paddock. Gordon brought the horse, and the inspector looked it over.

““Gordon,” he said, “those stirrup irons are very rusty.”

““Well sir,” replied Gordon, “I didn’t join as an officers’ groom.”

““Well, Gordon,” said the inspector quietly, “if you don’t like what you have to do you had better resign.”

‘And Gordon did.’

According to Trainor in *The Australasian*, 27 April 1895: ‘That difficulty was smoothed over. But a little later Gordon was ordered to convey a woman of disreputable character a ride of sixty miles in custody, and resigned rather than fulfil the task.’

The Argus, 2 September 1924, reported: ‘An interesting centenarian died in Brisbane a few days ago in the person of Charles Mullaley, who was a steeplechaser of note in his younger days, and was a close companion of Adam Lindsay Gordon. He had reached the great age of 105 years,

and in an interesting chat a little time before his death gave an interesting account of how Lindsay Gordon came to leave the South Australian police. Mullaley said he was breaking in horses on Livingstone's station at the time, and rode into Robe to look for help. While he was sitting on the verandah of the hotel talking to an inspector of the South Australian police Gordon came along dressed in uniform. Over the way there was a woman, the wife of a local resident, who was a little under the influence of liquor. The inspector ordered Gordon to put the woman in the lock-up, but Gordon thought she was not a case for the lock-up, and took her to her home. The inspector reprimanded Gordon for disobeying orders, and Mullaley, seeing that Gordon was dissatisfied, offered him work at the station. The outcome was that Gordon resigned, and went to break in horses with Mullaley at Livingstone's.'

In 'The Friend of Charley Walker' Elliott quotes two letters from the Archives, Public Library, Adelaide. 15 October 1855 the Commissioner of Police inquired: 'I should have been glad to know *why* so steady and efficient a Trooper should be dissatisfied and wish to leave this honourable employment.'

The inspector, George B. Scott, replied from Penola, 1 November. 'In answer to your Memo respecting the resignation of P.T. Gordon – I have the honour to inform you, that P.T. Gordon told me he intended to turn his attention to driving cattle to market. – I am not aware that he was dissatisfied with the Police Force, but I imagine he thinks it more lucrative to be a drover.

'I am sorry to lose him, as he has conducted himself remarkably well while stationed here, which has been for a period of about eighteen months.'

Gordon resigned from the mounted police 4 November 1855, a week short of two years' service. He wrote to Charley Walker from Penola, October 1855: 'I have sent in my resignation. When I leave the force I shall be busy for a month or two with some young stock (colts) I want to get rid of and shall then D.V. be *again upon the seas for home*. I wonder if I shall find Jane married by the bye, I half expect to. To you I am neither afraid nor ashamed to own that I would marry her to-morrow if I had the chance and she would have me.'

He did not sail for home. Instead, as he wrote to Walker, January 1857: 'I have been working on my own account since, to wit, stock-jobbing, i.e. trucking and dealing in horseflesh and bringing colts overland for myself.'

For the next seven years he was occupied in buying and selling and breaking in horses, travelling round the bush from station to station.



Henry Kendall's background was considerably less privileged and patrician than Clarke's or Gordon's. His grandfather, Thomas Kendall, was born in Lincolnshire in 1778. Originally a schoolteacher, he responded to the call to be a missionary, and went to the Bay of Islands in New Zealand in 1814. He published some important early works on the Maori language. He also traded arms with the Maoris, left his wife, and aged forty-three set up house with the seventeen-

year-old daughter of a Maori chieftain. He was suspended in 1823, 'a public disgrace to the sacred ministry,' the Rev. Samuel Marsden told him.

Alexander Sutherland records in *Turner and Sutherland* that Thomas Kendall then spent some time in Chile, and his son Basil served in the Chilean navy. In 1827 he took up 1280 acres of land at Ulladulla on the south coast of New South Wales and became a timber merchant in the cedar trade. He was drowned in a shipwreck at Shoalhaven aged fifty-one. His son Basil worked for a while as a clerk in the flour business in Sydney, and then settled on the Ulladulla property. In 1835 Basil married. According to the wedding certificate his wife was called Melinda Olivia Leonora McAllan; Melinda McNally according to her death certificate. She seems also to have been called Millinda, Metinda and Matilda, Bishop Reed notes in his doctoral thesis on Henry Kendall. The daughter of an Irish policeman, Patrick McNally, Melinda claimed descent from the Irish barrister, nationalist and informer, Leonard McNally (1750–1820). Sutherland writes of Leonard: 'For a year or more the United Irishmen hatched their plans at his table, when the Government turned its attention to him. He grew frightened, tried to discover how much had been revealed that would incriminate him, and thereby exposed himself unnecessarily. He was threatened with prosecution unless he gave all information in his power. In a moment of weakness, he told all he knew, and thenceforward was kept with cruel rigour hard up to the line he had chosen. Outwardly he was the confidential legal adviser of the rebels, their chosen advocate in all their trials, a declaimer in all quiet meetings of Irishmen against the Government, his mercurial tongue delighting the people and their leaders ... yet all the time, once a fortnight or so, he was supplying the government with secret information as to all that was being done or planned.' The song 'Sweet Lass of Richmond Hill' is ascribed to McNally, amongst other writers.

18 April 1839 twin sons were born to Melinda and Basil Kendall, in a bush hut or humpy at Kirmington a mile or so from where the town of Milton now stands, though Milton did not exist at the time. 'Basil Edward, registered first and named after his father, was apparently the elder. Thomas Henry was named after his paternal grandfather,' A. G. Stephens writes in 'Kendall's Name and Age', *The Bulletin*, 21 August 1929. On various occasions in later years Henry Kendall would shave a couple of years off his age and say he was born in 1841 or 42. But he wasn't. In such poems as 'Araluen', 'Illa Creek', and 'Kiama', collected in his first book, Kendall was to record his response to the beauty of the country south of Sydney where he spent his early years. A memorial cairn to Kendall was erected at his birthplace by students of Milton Public School in 1913, and the day was celebrated as Kendall Day. The stone cairn was eventually dismantled and the stones used for a creek crossing. It was replaced with a sandstone monument in 1972.

In 1845 the family moved to northern New South Wales around the Clarence and Orara rivers, first to Gordon Brook station, another auspiciously poetical name, between Yulgibar and Copmanhurst, whose name in turn derives from Sir Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe*. Three more children were born, Mary Josephine in 1844, Christina Jane in 1846 and Edith Emily in 1850. Thomas Bawden, a pioneering resident and mayor of Grafton, recalled in a lecture to the Grafton School of Arts, 5 August 1886: 'It was at Gordon Brook that I first knew the poet Kendall. Mr and Mrs Kendall were engaged by Dr Dobie of Sydney to take charge of a sheep station and two flocks of

sheep. One of these flocks was tended by the poet Henry Kendall, and his twin brother Basil, who also animated to a slight extent with the poetic fire. After living twelve months at Gordon Brook, the Kendall family left and came to Grafton where Mr Kendall kept a school for some years up to the time of his death.' The *Sydney Morning Herald* reported 29 December 1847: 'Basil Kendall was indicted for that he, on the 16th October, did feloniously utter a forged order on the Commercial Bank for £5 with intent to defraud certain people trading under the name of Patrick and Son. The prisoner pleaded guilty and was remanded for sentence.' 2 January 1848 it reported that he was imprisoned with hard labour for two years. 12 October 1852 his death was recorded: 'At South Grafton on the 23rd September Mr Basil Kendall of consumption. Aged 42 years.' Melinda returned south and kept a day school at Fairy Meadow, near Wollongong. What education Kendall received seems to have been from his parents. He always acknowledged his mother's love of literature. She wrote verse herself and is said to have published a volume. His twin brother Basil wrote and published verse, too.

'In the year 1855 I went for a trip to the South Sea Islands. The vessel, a barque, was commanded by an uncle of mine,' Kendall wrote in 'A Fight with a Devil Fish', *The Australasian*, 5 June 1869. Kendall's Uncle Joseph was master of the brig *Plumstead*; but Kendall calls the ship the *Waterwitch* in 'A Cruise amongst the South Sea Islands' in *The Australasian*, 7 May 1870. In his edition of Kendall's letters Donovan Clarke established from the maritime records that the whaling ship *Waterwitch* was under the command of Captain William Lee, and that Kendall was back in Sydney by March 1857. He possibly served on both ships during his eighteen months at sea as an apprentice.

Marcus Clarke wrote in *The Leader* supplement, 19 March 1881: 'Whether he visited Omoo or landed at Typee is uncertain, but it is more than probable that he talked with Steelkit and Daggoo, and caught a glimpse of Moby Dick breaching immortally to broad heaven.' 'The wonderful islands of the South Pacific are mirrored in my memory yet,' Kendall wrote to Joseph Sheridan Moore, 29 June 1877.

Returned to Sydney, he lived with his mother and family in a cottage which backed on to the old Camperdown cemetery, Michael Ackland writes in *Henry Kendall: The Man and the Myths*. A. G. Stephens recorded in 'Kendalliana - IV' in *The Bulletin*, 9 July 1930: 'Louisa Lawson searched earnestly for Kendalliana. She found an old employee of Biddell Brothers, the Sydney confectioners, for whom he worked as errand-boy when he came back to Sydney from sea, a lad of eighteen. This man told her that Kendall used to be sent out with a tray of tarts and cakes, which he learned to carry on his head, through the streets of Sydney. Already he was composing juvenile poetry, and, as he walked along, with half-seeing eyes fixed in a vacant stare, you could see his mouth working as he mumbled over his lines. People would turn and look at him: "There goes Mad Harry!"'

In 1859 Kendall's first poem published, 'O, Tell Me, Ye Breezes', appeared, somewhat poignantly in view of his later life, in 'a journal for the promotion of temperance', the *Australian Home Companion and Band of Hope*. Others soon followed in the Sydney dailies *The Empire* and, from 1861, the *Sydney Morning Herald*. December 1859 appeared *Silent Tears. A Song of*

Affection, the words by H. Kendall (A Native Poet) the music composed by George Peck, leader and musical director to the Prince of Wales Theatre &c. Sydney published at Peck's Music Repository. It was engraved and printed by John Degotardi, and sold for two shillings and sixpence. George Peck was the composer of 'Australian Masonic Waltzes'. It was reprinted in *The Empire*, signed H. Kendall, N.A.P. *The Empire* commented: 'We are puzzled as to the signification of the mystic letters – if we read them correctly, it would be more unassuming to omit them!'

The Sydney *Empire* had been established and edited by Henry Parkes in 1850, but financial difficulties forced him to cease publication in August 1858. Parkes went bankrupt, with liabilities exceeding £53,000. Kendall did not meet Parkes until 1863, according to A. W. Martin in *Henry Parkes: A Biography*. When *The Empire* resumed publication in May 1859 it was under the ownership of William Hanson and Samuel Bennett. Ackland's biography records that Kendall's sister Josephine became a governess to Hanson's family in 1863, and for a while Kendall was in love with Bennett's daughter Rose, who inspired his poem 'Rose Lorraine'.

In due course Kendall became disillusioned with *The Empire*. He wrote to Joseph Sheridan Moore, 9 September 1864: 'How I hate that paper! How I detest the lot that are on it: from the mealy mouthed shopman upward to Hanson and that fiddle-faced impostor Bennett. Why are they and men like Fairfax allowed to trample on the head of Genius? Some day yet I shall take my proper place in the world of letters.'



By the end of his twenty-first year, 1860, Kendall had published twenty-one poems and made contact with Sydney literary society. Through *The Empire* he came to meet Joseph Sheridan Moore, the son of a Dublin lawyer, who had been educated at Stonyhurst and had come to Australia aged twenty in 1848. Moore was a writer and teacher, for a while a Benedictine monk and headmaster of Lyndhurst College in Glebe, leaving the order in 1856 and marrying in 1857. He introduced Kendall to the literary circle of the lawyer and bibliophile and former friend of Thomas De Quincey, Nicol Stenhouse, who lived in Balmain; it included the poet and politician Daniel Deniehy who had been articled to Stenhouse, the poet and barrister James Michael, and Dr John Woolley, who had been appointed the first principal of the University of Sydney in preference to the poet Arthur Hugh Clough. Sutherland writes in *Turner and Sutherland*: 'There was at that time no Public Library in Sydney, and the kindly doctor did a great service to the young poet by securing for him an entry whenever he liked into the University Library.' Woolley also offered Kendall the chance to take an Arts course at the university for free, but Kendall declined on the grounds he had to earn a living. Stenhouse's library of 4000 volumes was donated to the University of Sydney in 1878.

Moore had edited *The Month*, the journal Frank Fowler established in July 1857, after Fowler returned to England to escape his creditors; it closed in December 1858. James Tyrell quotes Moore's description of Fowler: 'a brilliant talker, a sparkling wit, and the most genial companion

that ever drank your wine, or borrowed half-a-sovereign'. Moore later edited the *Tamworth Examiner*, and helped found the *Sydney University Magazine* and the *University Review*. Deniehy had established the *Southern Cross*, 'a weekly journal of politics, literature and social progress', in October 1859, and Kendall contributed a poem on the wreck of the *Dunbar*. Kendall later recalled in 'About Some Members of a Colonial Literary Dinner Party', *Australasian*, 2 April 1870: 'One newspaper in particular (the *Southern Cross*) edited by the late Mr Deniehy, and contributed to by some of the most brilliant men of letters we have ever had on this side of the equator, sparkled from the first to the last column with evidences of the singular literary power it had at its command.' It survived less than a year.

Moore's encouragement prompted Kendall to publish his first book, *Poems and Songs*. It was advertised in *The Empire* and *Sydney Morning Herald* in January 1861: 'THE MUSE OF AUSTRALIA – In preparation for Publication (by subscription), THE POEMS AND SONGS OF HENRY KENDALL, the boy-poet of Australia. At the request of several literary and influential gentlemen, and after a severe critical examination of the work, MR SHERIDAN MOORE has consented to superintend the publication. So convinced is he of its merit that he has no fear of commending it to the taste and patriotism of the country. Subscription Lists lie at several book and music dealers, in town and country.'

14 August the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported a lecture by Moore at the School of Arts: 'The lecturer, in conclusion, made an earnest appeal on behalf of Australian poetic genius, and urged the claims of Mr Henry Kendall, for aid in the publication of whose works he intended shortly to give an entertainment at the School of Arts.'



There are a number of recollections of Gordon in his horse-breaking years. A 'travelling correspondent of the Melbourne *Leader*' recalled his first meeting with him in 'Adam Lindsay Gordon: Justice to the Memory of the Bush Poet. The Facts of his Life and Death,' in *The Press*, Christchurch, 23 September 1891: 'I was riding along a road near Digby, in Normanby, when I saw a tall man with a cabbage-tree hat, corduroy pantaloons, blue shirt, and Wellington boots jump his horse over the fence and gallop up to me. He knew who I was, although I did not know him, and he asked me a number of questions about Melbourne, which he had never visited, and about the expense of publishing a volume of poems, which he had told me he had written. We rode together, till near the Rifle Downs station, where we parted, and he made in the direction of Glenelg. He had mentioned his name to me, and I afterwards found that he was well known in the neighbourhood, and especially all around Mount Gambier.'

In *The Australasian*, 14 July 1906, Owen Meylett published 'Some Gordon Reminiscences' from Horace Tolmer: 'After Gordon left the police he started as a horse-breaker, and one job he undertook was to break in 173 colts, of the ES brand, for E. Stockdale of Lake Hawdon. Mr Tolmer, then a boy of 14 years, assisted him. Gordon's favourite costume was a jumper, and he always wore jockey boots inside his trousers of close-fitting pilot cloth. He wore his trousers

short, the wrinkle of his boots showing below. He appeared to be very slow in putting on a bridle or tackling; but really got it on quicker than other men. He always wore a little soft pad, made of basil, on the pommel of the saddle when he rode. During all the time Mr Tolmer was breaking-in horses with him he never saw Gordon thrown.'

Harry Stockdale recalled Gordon in *The Argus*, 17 May 1919: 'I knew Adam Lindsay Gordon well in the sixties, when we were both employed on my uncle Edward's cattle and horse station – Lake Hawdon, near Guichen Bay, S.A. Into the following notes I have put my memories of one of the best and bravest men I ever knew.

'Gordon was distinctly a good-looking man; when animated, with his head thrown back and his dark-grey eyes sparkling, he struck you as remarkably handsome. At such times his bearing was proud and dignified, and he carried himself splendidly. He was not always particular how he dressed: his clothes were usually very unpretentious. His old Melbourne friends would scarcely recognize him by his clean-shaven South Australian photograph (the one most often seen); for in Victoria he wore his reddish beard. His hair was dark brown, inclining to reddish.

'He was very short-sighted and very sensitive about his short sight. On many occasions, when out horse-hunting at Old Lake Hawden Station (bringing in the colts for market or branding) on hearing any of the party sing out, "There they are," he would almost instantly remark, "Yes. I see them. Yes, there's a grey amongst them." "Gordon's grey one" used to be a standing joke (in his absence) on the station. For there was hardly a mob of E.S. horses without a grey one.

'E.S. stood for Edward Stockdale, for whom Gordon and I worked together for years. Later he acquired a little farm home, "Dingley Dell," where I spent many happy days with him. Cape Northumberland, where the *Admella* was wrecked in 1865, was not far away. I have heard it doubted whether Gordon's poem "From the Wreck" describes his own experience, and I answer Yes, he describes his own ride with the news of a disaster that shocked Australia at the time.

'When at home on the farm Gordon wrote a good deal in a very irregular fashion on all sorts and sizes of paper – old envelopes, bills, and so on. He was always inclined to brood; sometimes I thought he was a little superstitious.

'The episode of the horse race which was really the thing that brought him to this country has been told several times. His own story, as told to me, was that he and Tom Oliver had shares or were halves in a horse he was going to ride in a steeplechase. The horse was seized by the bailiff for a debt of Oliver's and Gordon in his headstrong way, took possession of it by force. This turned out to be a grave legal offence which caused some trouble before it was settled.

'When Gordon was in the S.A. mounted police he was riding from the south-east to Adelaide and had perforce to cross a narrow neck of the ninety mile-desert, lying between the Wellington crossing of the River Murray and the Glenelg. He got a bad sunstroke. He was travelling in the company of Mr Young, afterwards governor of the Mount Gambier Gaol, and he considered that but for Mr Young's presence and help he might have lost his life. Gordon's head, all through his career, had too much knocking about.

‘Gordon might be described as the soul of truth. He scorned a liar, holding that a liar was lower than a thief. He was an extremely modest man, and especially respectful to all women, rich or poor ...

‘When we were at Mount Gambier Gordon and I paid several visits to the Blue Lake in the early morning. Gordon would tackle and enjoy the steepest and most dangerous descent. (I always went down the safest way I could find.) Once at the bottom he would strip off and plunge into the blue black water – often nearly as cold as ice, and keep in so long that when he came out his flesh was all goosey and his teeth chattered. Sometimes he was so cold he could hardly talk but he always maintained it was glorious. (I let him have all the glory and the chattering to himself.)

‘Gordon was always a good worker, early riser, and a regular all weathers early bather. At Robe town I have seen him swim out until you lost sight of him amongst the waves, while I paddled about hip deep close in shore. In everything this man did he was different from other people. He seemed a law unto himself.

‘I was present on the now historic night when the Rev. J. Tenison Woods came to Old Lake Hawdon station and sat talking with Gordon till past midnight. They talked of their favourite authors – of home associations and schoolboy days – Gordon regretting that he had not gone into the army, where he would have bid an aim in life congenial to his inclination. Tenison Woods said it was at one of the English universities that the whole tenor of his life was changed through coming in touch with the famous Newman. Prior to this I understood him to say he belonged to the English Church.

‘They also talked of the antiquity of man and either soon after or just before, Tenison Woods delivered a lecture at Robe on the same subject. Gordon that night said “Look here Father, what does it matter. Old or young it all comes to eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow you die.”

‘Gordon and Woods were both at times lighthearted and gay with occasional relapses into grave moods, as though their thoughts were far away. They left the impression upon me that in each life the past held a shadow.’

There are drawings by Harry Stockdale of Gordon on Outlaw, in the National Library, and on Cadger, in the Mitchell. Paintings of the Blue Lake by Hans Heysen and Dingley Dell by Will Ashton are in Vidler’s *Adam Lindsay Gordon Memorial Volume*.



W. Park Low’s papers preserve another newspaper cutting: ‘Adam Lindsay Gordon, Poet, scholar and horseman. Personal reminiscences by Harry Stockdale’: ‘I remember on one occasion Gordon coming to the old Lake Station late at night, and, of course, remaining. I was in a room with two small iron bedsteads. Gordon soon occupied the other. There was a chair between the two bed heads with a lamp. I was deeply interested in Tom Hood’s “Miss Kilmansegg and her Golden Leg,” when Gordon after lighting a pipe, begged me to read aloud. I read somewhat about a couple of hundred lines. The peculiar metre seemed to tickle his fancy so much that on leaving

off Gordon immediately repeated the whole verbatim; and as he was previously unacquainted with the poem it was, to say the least, a wonderful example of the powerful retentiveness of his memory. Shortly after breakfast next morning he left us, and did not return for some two or three months afterwards, when I asked him had he forgotten “Miss Kilmansegg.” He said he was afraid he had; but on my reaching down the book and reading about a dozen lines to him, he commenced and finished the lot almost as easily as he had done on the first occasion. Gordon was, for an educated man, the worst reader I ever heard, and he was quite conscious of his failing, remarking that his mother, who was a most accomplished reader, had been driven almost to despair trying to make him even passable in that particular line, but had at last given him up as a hopeless case. His style was more like singing than reading, and very unpleasant to listen to, but he was very partial to being read to, and would listen for hours to my reading Scott, Byron’s *Childe Harold*, or Shelley.

‘Gordon at this time used to dress in drab-coloured breeches and knee-boots, his neck bound round by several turns of a large black silk kerchief, with seldom if ever a collar.’

Major-General Thomas Bland Strange recalled Gordon’s memory as a schoolboy in *Gunner Jingo’s Jubilee*: ‘Setting aside a fair amount of caning over the hand, the principal punishment was the committal to memory of twenty to fifty lines of Virgil or Homer. This was a laborious task to most of us, but to Gordon it was nothing, since his surprising memory enabled him to recite his lines after one of two perusals.’

In ‘Personal Reminiscence of Adam Lindsay Gordon’, *Melbourne Review*, April 1884, Julian Tenison Woods recalled an occasion in 1860: ‘We were overtaken by a severe storm and lost our way. Night came on, and the rain poured down in torrents. As my sight at night was nearly as defective as Gordon’s we gave up looking for the track, and sat crouched under a tree waiting for the rising of the moon. We were both miserably cold and hungry, and it was most ludicrous to hear my companion reciting long passages from various authors on the subject of storms. We could not light a fire, and I only had to shiver while he gave me the tempest scene in *King Lear*, which he knew by heart. He was much amused when I asked him whether he would like a nice drink of cold spring water after his exertions. We got to a station about midnight and had to share the same room; but Gordon would not go to bed. The warm tea we had had at supper had revived him, and he kept walking up and down the supper room reciting *Childe Harold* till near morning.’

Tenison Woods shows no amazement at Gordon’s memory, having inherited and developed a similar memory himself, his first biographer, George O’Neill, records.



Julian Tenison Woods was born to Irish parents in London in 1832. In 1850 he entered the Passionist order at Broadway in Worcestershire – the Congregation of Discalced Clerics of the Holy Cross and Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ – and later taught at a naval college in Toulon. In 1855 he came to Australia, where his brother Edward was a journalist on the Melbourne *Argus*, and his brother James secretary to the central roads board in Adelaide. James was married to

Catherine Griffin, a niece of the Irish poet Gerald Griffin, and was the author of *Aborigines of South Australia*, *The Province of South Australia* and *A Narrative of the Visit of HRH The Duke of Edinburgh to South Australia*, being one of the official party accompanying the Duke. A younger brother, Terry, came to South Australia in 1856. An account of Woods in the *Australian Monthly Magazine*, May 1867, signed R.G., declared: 'The literary proclivities of the Rev. Mr Woods are evidently hereditary; many of his near relatives having been occupied, and are still occupying, proud positions on the English press. His father, a barrister of the Middle Temple, has been connected for over thirty years with the *London Times*; his eldest brother was long engaged upon the same journal and subsequently upon *The Argus*; whilst a second brother, Mr N. A. Woods, will be readily remembered as the colleague of Dr Russell in the Crimea, and afterwards as special correspondent of *The Times*, on the occasion of the visit of HRH the Prince of Wales to the American continent.' Nicholas' account of the Crimean War was published as *The Past Campaign* in 1855.

After working for a while as a subeditor on the *Adelaide Times*, Julian studied with the Jesuits at Sevenhills, and in January 1857 was ordained as a priest. For the next ten years, 1857 to 1866, he ministered to the diocese of Penola. It was here that he met Gordon and Mary MacKillop.

Tenison Woods recalled: 'I became acquainted with poor Gordon in 1857. I had then charge of a large district called the new country. It was comprised between the coast line of South Australia and boundary line of the Victorian colony, enclosed on the north by the River Murray. This tract included about 22,000 square miles of country, more than half of which was desert. The remaining portion being taken up as sheep and cattle runs. Gordon was occupied as a horse-breaker and dealer, and at the races in the various bush townships he used to ride as a jockey, but only in steeplechases and hurdle races. He was then a tall, slim young man, with a peculiar stooping figure and very awkward gait. This arose from being so near-sighted that his head was thrown forward and his half closed eyes were peering around as he walked along. His head was well formed, with short, curly, brown hair. His features were small, and the whole contour of his face reminded one a good deal of the portraits of Byron. His beard was thin and scanty, and his complexion pale.

'My introduction to him was at a cattle station, Lake Hawdon, near Guichen Bay. He was breaking in a few horses for Mr Stockdale, the proprietor. I arrived at the station in the evening, and he was at work, I remember, in the stockyard, sitting a young colt which was making surprising efforts to throw him. I watched the struggle for some minutes, and it ended by the girths breaking, and Gordon landed on his feet. We met that evening at supper, for in those days master and man, stranger and guest, all sat at the same table and shared the same fare. I remember little about Gordon that evening except that he was painfully near-sighted. He scarcely spoke. After supper he came to me upon the verandah and chatted for an hour; and I was surprised to find that his conversation was not about the usual station topics, but about poetry and poets. I was much interested and inquired who he was ...'

Stockdale told Tenison Woods about Gordon's police career: 'Mr Stockdale further remarked that there was something above the common in Gordon. He never drank or gambled, two ordinary

qualifications of bush hands in those days. He was not exactly a favourite, because he was rather moody and silent, and did not associate much with the men working with him, but, being quiet and obliging, was liked.

‘Next morning he overtook me as I rode on my journey,’ Tenison Woods recalled. ‘I well remember his appearance. He had on the usual bush costume of a slouch hat, a blue jumper tucked in at the waist, with a pair of riding cords, these again ending at the calf in common Wellington boots. He was always neatly dressed, and certainly had an air about him of a gentleman.

‘As soon as we could talk, he plunged into poetry again. To my astonishment, he began to recite long passages from Virgil, Ovid and Homer. His pronunciation of the Greek was so peculiar that I could not understand him ... He questioned me about French authors, and then recited long passages from Racine’s *Athalie* and Corneille’s *Cid*. His pronunciation was defective, though I think he told me he had been some time in France ... He had an odd way of reciting poetry, and his delivery was monotonous, but his way of emphasizing the beautiful portions of what he recited was charming from its earnestness.

‘After that day we often met,’ Tenison Woods recalled. ‘My duties consisted in going from station to station, often long distances apart, and separated by little known and desert country. It was always a great advantage to have a companion, if it were only because the horses travelled better, and two heads are better than one in crossing difficult country. But to meet with a companion like Gordon was quite a treat. He was so remarkably shy and retiring that he scarcely ever came to see me at my house, that is when I had a house ...

‘I remember his telling me that he knew very little of Horace, and so I gave him a small pocket edition. When next I met him he had learnt a good many of the odes, and recited them for me as we rode along ...

‘He used always to carry a book with him in his pocket, and generally it was a Latin classic. It will be easily understood how soon the volume became knocked to pieces in this way. Whatever books I lent him were generally returned in a most dilapidated condition, yet I could not complain when I saw how well used they had been. On those occasions I told him, while he was apologizing with a rueful countenance for the woeful state in which the book was returned, that books were made to be used, and I recollect his saying that he felt like one apologizing for knocking up a borrowed horse by over-riding.’

Tenison Woods had his own literary ambitions. Margaret Press notes that in 1857 he began publishing articles on Australian geography in the *Transactions of the Philosophical Institute of Victoria*, the institute Marcus’s cousin Andrew Clarke had established. In 1862 his *Geological Observations in South Australia* was published in London by Longmans. His *History of the Discovery and Exploration of Australia* appeared in 1865. Clarke quoted from its description of the Alpine Chain a decade later when writing about Chevalier’s painting of the Buffalo Ranges.

The venture into horse-breaking was not a financial success. Gordon wrote to Charley Walker, January 1857: 'The truth is I was in too great a hurry to be independent and did not wait till I had accumulated sufficient capital to carry out my projects, chancing too much to Fortune which till latterly has not been so very unkind. The old fault, Charley, make up your mind to win, and if you lose shift for yourself as best you may.'

Perhaps he was ahead of his time. Marcus Clarke's *History of the Continent of Australia* notes for 1857: 'The Indian Government this year sent Colonel Robbins as its remount agent to purchase horses in Australia. His report was that no other country, except England, was its equal for fine grass lands with pasture containing that substantial aromatic quality which accounted for the great size and substance the horses attain, combined with the wonderful endurance for which they are noted. The breeding of horses for India has now become a profitable business, and is largely carried on in all parts of the continent.'

17 June 1857 Gordon's father died; two years later his mother died, 29 April 1859. 26 October 1861 Gordon's bank book shows an entry of £7000, a legacy from their estates. Tenison Woods recalled: 'As usual in such case the amount was much exaggerated, and Gordon was everywhere talked of as a millionaire. He told me, however, the amount was not very large, but that he would henceforth give up horse-breaking, and buy, or rent, a small station. He said with great satisfaction that he would have more time to himself now, and I wondered how he would be more to himself than he was.'

Trainor recalled in *The Australasian*, 27 April 1895: 'he squandered his money freely when he had it, principally in kindnesses to others. I have known him, in the days of his comparative prosperity, lend £600 to a man who ill deserved it, for the borrower had shortly before refused to honour an order for £6 which he owed to Gordon for horse-breaking.'

On another occasion Gordon paid £800 in a vain attempt to save a storekeeper at Penola from bankruptcy.

Gordon now entered into the life of a gentleman rider, making a reputation in local steeplechases at Mount Gambier, MacDonnell Bay, Penola and Guichen Bay.

Meanwhile in 1860, the eighteen-year-old Mary MacKillop had left Melbourne to work as a governess for her uncle and aunt, Margaret and Alexander Cameron at Penola. Paul Gardiner quotes her account of how she met Tenison Woods: 'I heard the pastor from the altar speak of the neglected state of children of his parish – and I had to go and offer myself to aid him as far as the nature of my other duties would permit.' It was a significant meeting. Woods outlined to her his scheme to educate the children of the poor and they corresponded regularly. A school was established in Penola in 1861 and in 1866 the teaching order, the Sisters of St Joseph, was founded, committed to poverty and equality. Mary told Archbishop Kelly years later, Gardiner records: 'Circumstances have overshadowed the part played by Father Woods in the inception of our Institute. Nearly all was due to him, as will appear from our correspondence, which I have preserved. He may never be overlooked in the history of what God has done by our sisters.' In 2010 Mary MacKillop became Australia's first saint.

¶
 20 October 1862 Gordon married Margaret Park. 'I first met him about twelve months before that,' she said in an interview she gave to C. R. Wilton in the *Adelaide Advertiser*, 23 March 1912. Born in Glasgow, 22 March 1845, she came out to South Australia as an infant in 1852. She told *The Advertiser*: 'Her father was Mr Alexander Park, who when he landed originally in Victoria carried on a baker's business in Melbourne, but shortly afterwards crossed the border and accepted an engagement on the station of the late Mr W. Hutchinson, near Robe.'

A story often told is that Gordon had been confined to bed after a heavy fall from his horse, and that after Maggie had nursed him to his recovery he proposed. But W. Park Low in his typescript biography in the State Library of South Australia, *The Real Adam Lindsay Gordon*, quotes an article by a friend of Maggie's, Katherine Hughes, stating that Maggie told her: 'So many untrue stories have been told ... How I nursed him after a hunting fall – not true! I met him at a Robe race meeting and he came to stay at the hotel where I lived.'

Peter Low, who married Maggie after Gordon's death, likewise corrected this story in an interview with the *Adelaide Register*, 5 October 1922: "'You knew Gordon?'" Mr Low was asked.

"'Yes,'" he replied. "All our family respected him. He was called 'Long' Gordon in those days. He was the soul of honour; a gentleman every inch of him; and a splendid husband. Some romancers have written regarding the meeting of Gordon and his wife. It has been stated that Gordon was taken seriously ill at Robe, and was nursed back to health by Miss Maggie Park, whom he subsequently married out of gratitude to her. This is not correct. As a matter of fact, Gordon was never in better health than during his sojourn at Robe. He had his racehorses quartered at the Robe Hotel, and Miss Park was engaged at McQueen's Criterion Hotel. Gordon was so infatuated with the young lady that he removed to where he could be close to his ladylove.'"

Julian Tenison Woods recalled of the marriage: 'Nothing ever surprised me so much. Of all my acquaintance, he was least like a marrying man. When I met him subsequently, he told me that it was true he had become a married man, and had taken to house-keeping. He had rented a small cottage in the township of Robe, Guichen Bay, South Australia. He smiled in his usual quiet way, as I told him of my surprise, and said that there was no romance about his love-making. He had met his wife at a place where he stayed frequently – the hotel at Kingston, I think, but I am not sure. He said that he noticed that she was a very respectable and industrious girl, who would make him a good, thrifty housekeeper. A few days before he married, he said one morning, as he was leaving, "Well, girl, I like your ways. You seem industrious and sensible. If you like, I will take a cottage at Robe, and we will get married next week, and you shall keep home for me." This was the whole history of the matter, he said. The girl consented, and they were married a few days after.'

Maggie told *The Advertiser*: 'I stayed with Mr Bradshaw Young then sergeant of police at Mount Gambier, for a little while before the wedding, which took place at the residence of the Presbyterian Minister, who performed the ceremony. Mr Gordon and I lived for a time in Mount

Gambier. The marriage certificate, preserved in the Park Low papers, records: '20 October 1862 Adam Lindsay Gordon, gent, 29, Margaret Park, 21 at house of Rev. J. Don.'

An auspiciously literary name for the marriage celebrant, though his Christian name was James, not John. In 'The Real Adam Lindsay Gordon' W. Park Low describes Gordon's gift to his bride of an 18 carat gold Rotherham watch and long gold muff chain that he hung round her neck on their wedding day.

It was the day after Gordon's twenty-ninth birthday. The marriage certificate said Maggie was twenty-one, but she told *The Advertiser* years later: 'I was just eighteen years when we were married.' According to Hutton she was in fact seventeen. Tenison Woods felt she looked even younger: 'When I called upon him some time afterwards, I was introduced to a small, slim, rather good-looking lassie, in appearance about fifteen years of age. Gordon had a strange habit of addressing her as "girl," which sounded a little odd before visitors, though it was appropriate in one sense.'

Small she was, barely five feet high. Gordon was over six feet, although he weighed only ten and a half stone.

Gordon made an affectionate sketch of himself standing and pointing, in uniform, sword at his side, and his wife sitting, eating loquats, which survives in the Park Low papers. A dozen of Gordon's sketches are reproduced in Humphris and Sladen.

'He was well to do when we were married, but he lost money in racing,' Maggie told *The Advertiser*.

Tenison Woods remarked: 'I am sure Mrs Gordon was to him the thrifty housekeeper he expected her to be. A companion to him she would hardly be, as the differences in their position and education were so great.' All rather déclassé. Though in relation to class, Tenison Woods records Gordon's remarking that 'the contempt shown by Thackeray for servants and persons in a menial position was a sad blot upon the fine tone which ran through his writings.' As Clarke wrote of class attitudes in his preface to Charles L. Money's *Knocking About in New Zealand* in 1871: 'Being a gentleman, he does not look with contempt upon such of his fellow-creatures as are poorer in goods or education than himself.'

'He never spoke much of his family,' Maggie told *The Advertiser*: 'Indeed, he did not speak much about anything. He was very reticent, and he did not like anyone prying into his affairs.' Humphris and Sladen publish a similar observation from Frank Madden: 'It was very difficult to get him to speak about himself.' It was not a unique trait. Mackinnon writes of 'the almost morbid reticence of the late Marcus Clarke about his early childhood and later boyhood.'

Gordon was similarly reticent about his background when in the bush he was sent to the men's hut instead of being asked into the house, Tenison Woods records:

'Then he recited Burns' "A man is a man for a' that." Yet, I must add, that he took the thing in good part, and said he would not blame them for not asking a horse-breaker into their parlour.

"I am as well born as any of them, and perhaps better educated, but then they don't know that."

On one occasion Gordon had been disqualified from entering a Lady's Purse race on the grounds that the committee allowed only gentleman riders to contend. The race was won by the son of a squatter who, a few years previously, had been a publican. The ladies, Tenison Woods recalled, 'gave a practical effect to their dissatisfaction by taking the most valuable things out of the bag before it was given to the winner. This Gordon knew, and his comments upon it were very cynical.'

Gordon's sister, Inez, had married Cavaliere Francesco Ratti, from the Italian family of the future Pope, Pius X. They lived in Nice. In *The Real Adam Lindsay Gordon* W. Park Low quotes a letter of 12 December 1857 Gordon's mother had written from Cheltenham: 'Your sister Inez most unexpectedly arrived from Nice with her little boy and his wet nurse ... to escape from the pecuniary difficulties her husband is involved in at present.'

Significantly, Maggie was Scottish, and her son, W. Park Low, recalled that while she had no Scotch accent to speak of, having come to Australia so young, at times she used many Scottish words and expressions. Gordon had crossed the class divide, while at the same time reinforcing his Scottish heritage. Was it in part a rejection of that English milieu in which he had grown up, Cheltenham the embodiment of middle England? His Scottish background was important to him. A number of his close friends were Scots or of Scots descent: John and George Riddoch, E. G. Blackmore, George Gordon McCrae, even Clarke whose Irish family had originated in Scotland. The *Adelaide Register*, 1 December 1894, quoted from the recollections of Major-General Thomas Bland Strange in *Gunner Jingo's Jubilee* about Gordon's schooldays: 'We slept in the same room (there were seven of us altogether), and at night after lights were out Gordon used to entertain us with long recitations from "Marmion" and "The Lord of the Isles," etc. Many of Scott's novels he also related to us, several nights being required to go through one of these.' The border ballads were a powerful tradition in which he was steeped. In *The Argus*, 11 June 1908, Sir Frank Madden recalled Gordon's racing colours – 'his tartan riding-jacket – the Royal Stuart Plaid – worn also by the Gordon Clan and the Gordon Highlanders.' Though recalling Gordon's colours in *The Age*, 3 June 1899, 'an old friend,' E. G. Blackmore, referred to 'his old Rob Roy tartan jacket'. And W. Park Low wrote in *The Real Adam Lindsay Gordon* that Gordon always rode in the Rob Roy tartan, a claim he repeated to Vox in *The Advertiser*, 6 June 1946.

One thing Margaret and Gordon had in common was a love of horses. He wrote to his uncle R. C. H. Gordon at Dodleston in England, June 1863: 'Australia must be different to what you remember it ... I have a little horse that I bought in Melbourne, a great beauty, as strong as a cart horse and nearly thoroughbred ... I could get a long price for him but do not like to sell him for two reasons, firstly Margaret (my wife) has taken a fancy to him and wants him for a hack and then I would like to see him go in a steeplechase as he is fast and capital bottom and it would surprise the Melbourne men so to see him go well over fences. Margaret is a good horsewoman. She and I rode out from Adelaide to Mount Gambier and six days on the road, a distance more than 300 miles, which made an average of 50 miles per day. This sounds strange but it is a fact and she was not very tired either ...

‘You will be sorry to hear that my health is not quite so good as it was. More than a year ago I got a severe fall my horse rolling over me and bruising me in the spine near the kidneys. Since then I have been aching occasionally though I am still strong and active at times I feel my bodily strength much the same and have nearly the same endurance, but for a long time I was often bad with pains in the back and nasty cramps and I could not sleep of a night and lost my appetite but I am better now thank God. The doctor told me that I should get all right in time but that it was an awkward place to get hurt and so indeed I found it.’

Nonetheless, Gordon continued steeplechasing, in 1863 competing not only locally but farther afield in Adelaide and Ballarat. He and Maggie were living in Mount Gambier, when on 8 March 1864 he purchased Dingley Dell, a stone cottage with a shingle roof, twenty-seven kilometres away on the coast. Maggie recalled to *The Advertiser*: ‘While we were living at Mount Gambier we often visited Dingley Dell, a pretty little cottage in a beautiful position near Port MacDonnell, which Mr Gordon had bought. There was a nice piece of land there, but he did no farming, although he kept racehorses at the place. We made a summer residence of the little cottage, which is now so well known as a tourist resort. We stopped there a week or two at a time, and then returned to Mount Gambier. We both liked the place, because of the attractiveness of its surroundings.’

The cottage was acquired for preservation by the South Australian government in 1922, Lorraine Day records in *Gordon of Dingley Dell*, and is now the Dingley Dell Cottage and Museum, housing Gordon’s steel-nibbed quill pens, piano (a Bord), squeeze-box, the baton, handcuffs and leggings he used as a trooper, Maggie’s saddle, and other memorabilia.



The Register, 2 November 1886, published ‘A. Lindsay Gordon and Dingley Dell by the late Mrs N. A. Lord.’ She was the daughter of the vicar of Mount Gambier in Gordon’s time, and had married a local businessman, according to Sladen in Humphris and Sladen. In fictional form, it is the narrative of a visit to Mount Gambier. Gordon emerges as a topic of conversation, and the narrator is told ‘that lady sitting by the fire knew him well’.

‘I fear I put the “lady by the fire” through a severe catechism, but she was so pleasant and had just as true and ardent an admiration for and appreciation of Gordon’s poetry as I have, and that, reader, is saying a very great deal. In the course of our converse I came upon the following: - “Mr Gordon used often to come to my father’s house, and we exchanged confidences on the subject of the ‘Idylls of the King,’ Lawrence’s and Whyte-Melville’s novels. *Barren Honour* was a great favourite of his; he liked Browning, too, and would repeat long pieces from any poem he admired in a strange, deep, monotonous voice, and with such a fire burning in his dark, cavernous eyes. He often rode his grey mare Modesty to our house, and one day as he was leaving I timidly remarked that I had enjoyed seeing her fly over the jumps at a late steeplechase. He replied, while arranging the mare’s headpiece, and without looking at me – he very seldom turned his eyes to my face – (Here I could not resist interpolating an expression of my surprise that such should be the case, a remark which the “lady by the fire” only noticed by the faintest flicker of a smile).

““You should see Ingleside,’ he said. ‘I am training him now. Going to ride him next week at C——. I take him in and out of the Lake paddocks every morning.’

““Could Modesty jump that fence?’ I asked, indicating a stiff one just outside our garden.

““He assented eagerly, and after saying farewell he took the grey over four of the fences within view of our drawing room windows, to my mother’s dismay and my great delight.”

‘After a little more talk and a refreshing cup of coffee the “lady by the fire” asked abruptly – “Are you going to put all this in a book?” I was taken aback!

““A book? What can make you think that?”

““Oh, you listen so intently, and ask so many questions,” then relapsing into her usual slow and easy style, “if there is ‘a chiel amang us takin’ notes,’ it is just as well to know it.

‘I could do nothing less, as a man of honour, than confess that it was possible her little selection of reminiscences would appear in print unless she forbade.

‘She replied, with heightened colour, but utter indifference of tone and manner, “It cannot matter to me in the least. Of course you will not mention my name.”

‘I said, “Of course not”; and then delicately intimated a sense of wonderment as to whether she had superintended the further training of Ingleside.

““Could I resist it? Three mornings that next week found me, race glass in hand, watching the splendid horse and his utterly fearless rider, over some very stiff timber. Mr Gordon used to ride up to where I sat on a fallen tree, and we would talk horses or poetry for a few minutes, never longer.” And the lady by the fire looked at me with a quick glance. “The third time I walked past the Blue Lake and down to the Flat beyond. After the usual performance, the horse and rider came up for a word of praise. As I was turning to go home, to my astonishment Mr Gordon said, his eyes fixed on the landscape ahead, ‘Does your mother know you come to see me jump?’ I must confess to having been entirely disconcerted, but I told him the unvarnished truth. ‘No, she would be horrified. She thinks racing wicked, and could not look at a horse jumping.’ ‘Good-bye,’ he said, ‘don’t come again.’ This was a new experience to me. Hitherto, if you will not mind my saying so, I had been accustomed to view the act of repression from the active, not the passive side. I dare say the change was wholesome, but not pleasant. I took my hand from my muff and offered it in farewell. He looked at it as if it were some natural curiosity. ‘It is the first time I have touched a lady’s hand for many a day – my own fault – my own fault – good-bye; you don’t know the world. I do; don’t come again.’ He spoke in his usual strange monotone, and before I had time to think or speak he was on the grey and away. As I walked home the country looked strangely misty. Mr Gordon always seemed so sad, hopelessly sad, and you can see a vein of despairing sorrow in almost all his poems. As to his advice, I am sure he was right, but I was young then, and girls do not fear Mrs Grundy.”“



Gordon had begun publishing verse slowly and anonymously. One of his first works was a slim fifteen page publication *The Feud: A Ballad Dedicated to Noel Paton, R.S.A., As a key to his*

illustrations of *'The Dowie Dens o' Yarrow'* by A. Lindsay, published by Laurie, Watson and Laurie, Mount Gambier, 30 August 1864.

Sir John Langdon Bonython recalled in *Literary Opinion*, September 1891: 'Gordon, who at that time lived in the south-east, one night met a number of friends at the Mount Gambier Hotel, and during the evening his attention was drawn to a set of six plates illustrative of the old Border ballad "The Dowie Dens o' Yarrow," engraved from pictures painted by Mr (now Sir) Noel Paton for the Association for the Promotion of the Fine Arts in Scotland, and issued to that Association's subscribers. Gordon was much pleased with the plates, and intimated to one of the company his intention of using them as a subject for some verses. A day or two later he showed the poem to the gentleman he had spoken to, and an order was given to the proprietors of the *Border Watch* for thirty copies, with the stipulation that the authorship should be kept secret.'

Trainor offers another account in the *Bendigo Advertiser*, 30 June 1908: 'We were driving on our way to Mount Gambier, and stopped for lunch at Woodford, and to feed the horses. He was a tall man, and very thin. At the place we stopped at there was a picture over the mantelpiece. He stood up and kept looking and peering at this picture, and I thought, "What is he looking at that picture for?" At last he got up on a chair and looked at it. It was called "The Feud." Well, we went on to Mount Gambier, and there was a bazaar in aid of the church being got up, and I suppose he felt he would like to contribute something towards it. So he wrote this *Feud*, and had it published at the *Border Watch* office, and presented it to the bazaar, to be sold at one shilling a piece. Several people laughed and scoffed. They ridiculed him. "The idea of Long Gordon writing poetry!" they said. This got to his ears, and he was so disgusted that he called all the books in, and destroyed them. He threw away a few, and I got them.'

The *Border Watch* had begun publication in April 1861. When it published J. K. Moir's chronology of Gordon's life, 5 May 1936, it noted: 'Gordon was a constant visitor to the *Watch* office in the early days, and was an intimate friend of the proprietors.' *The Argus*, 21 October 1915, reported: 'Mr John Watson, who was a literary friend of Gordon's, referred to him as an intellectual and companionable man, and said that Gordon's earlier poems passed through his hands for publication, and appeared in the *Border Watch*.'

22 October 1864 Gordon's 'Verses inspired by "My old black pipe"' were published in the sporting paper, *Bell's Life in Victoria*. According to Trainor in *The Australasian*, 27 April 1895: 'They were written in a hut near Mount Gambier, about the year 1862, and thrown carelessly aside as worthless.'



Cuthbert Fetherstonhaugh devotes a chapter of his reminiscences, *After Many Days*, to Gordon, recalling their first meeting at Apsley in South Australia: 'He was riding a hard-pulling, hard-hitting "Kilanoola" horse called Clansman. He managed to get him round the course, but not without a fall. Gordon at that time rather preferred a difficult mount – one that no one else would care to send over the sticks. I was very much of the same mind myself, for I used to say, "If you

won on a favourite no one thought anything of it, but to win on a brute was a feather in the rider's cap."

'Gordon was a remarkable looking man – over six feet high, with a head of thick curly hair, and a strong resolute chin. He was painfully short sighted, and it's a wonder how he managed to ride at racing pace after wild horses and cattle through thick timber and over rough country. On one occasion he did get knocked off, and was badly hurt ...

'He was a moody, silent, reserved man, often as he himself has it, "some reverie locked in." He was an ugly rider, and appeared to sit loosely on his horse, but no buck-jumper could throw him, and no horse could clout a fence so hard as to shift Lindsay Gordon. His was the extreme reverse of the "Tod Sloan" style, for he leaned so far back going over a fence, that I have seen his head touch his horse's rump. I think he got into this habit through riding rough untried horses that used to hit their fences hard. Like myself, Gordon considered it was his business to stick in the saddle whatever happened. My code when riding was to stick to the saddle, and if the horse fell to stick to the reins. When driving stick to the trap as long as you can, and when upset or thrown out stick to the reins. Gordon was absolutely fearless. Possibly he was reckless; but to overcome obstacles, to ride a bad horse to victory over the sticks, to subjugate an outlaw, to force a youngster over fences, or to win three steeplechases (as he did) in one day, was "life" to Gordon.'

Fetherstonhaugh continued: 'I think that Gordon's great success with horses lay in the fact that there was a subtle feeling of sympathy between horse and rider. They understood each other, and for that reason a horse would do more for Gordon than probably he would do for a much more artistic and finished horseman. For one thing he would without doubt impart determination and "divilment" to his mount. It is a well-known fact that many race horses will compete better, will try better, with certain jockeys up ... So with Gordon in his sympathy with, and knowledge of, his horses, and in their sympathy with, and knowledge of him, lay his success ...'

Fetherstonhaugh recalled Gordon's famous leap: 'Gordon, Trainor and some others were riding along the Blue Lake, when suddenly, without any warning, Gordon turned his horse round and sent him over the fence, a big one, too, protecting the road from the steep drop into the lake. There was just space for the horse to land and no more. Had Red Lancer not landed on that narrow bit of ground, and pulled up short on it, he and his rider would have gone down to certain destruction sheer into the lake, a big drop of some 100 feet. Gordon rode his horse along the ledge till he found a place with a little more room, and then jumped back to the road almost in a stand. It looked like a pretty close call, and was done in cold blood on the spur of the moment.'

Trainor told the *Bendigo Advertiser*, 30 June 1908: 'There was a race meeting at Mount Gambier, and after the meeting was over Captain Lyon, who was married to Governor Daly's sister, and was police magistrate at Mount Gambier, invited us to go for a hunt. Captain Lyon used to run a few horses at the time, and at the races I ran his horse Longbow, Gordon rode Modesty, and Bob Learmonth rode Ingleside. Well, we went a few miles out. We didn't have to go far in those days for kangaroos. It was nasty, rough country, and Gordon soon tired of the game. We were all on good jumpers. Gordon said, "Come on, boys, we will go to the township," which was just about four miles away. I knew what that meant. It meant a ride over some stiff

country. Gordon led, as he always did – pretty well – and took us a merry pace for a couple of miles to the Blue Lake, over some stiff timber, I tell you. Well, we landed and lit our pipes, and were congratulating ourselves – the three of us – on our getting through without coming to grief, for Gordon tried to throw us. That was just like Gordon – trying to do something somebody else couldn't do. There are two lakes, with a saddle going between the two. The saddle was formed by the high embankment of the road, and there was a fence each side down in the hollow, and a narrow strip of ground between the lake and the fence. We all rode along, talking away and smoking our pipes. Gordon lagged a little behind us. He got off his horse, and I thought he got off to loosen the girth after a big burst. A moment or two afterwards I heard a rattle of hoofs, and, turning round, saw Gordon riding Red Lancer towards the Blue Lake. Then, like a flash, he left the road and jumped his horse into mid-air, clearing the fence below, and landed on the narrow strip of ground. Then he rode along till the road ran down level, and then jumped back on to the road.

'I said to him, "What in the world did you do that for, Gordon?"

'He said, "Oh, well, when a man wears a green jacket like this (he used to wear a green riding jacket) he is supposed to do something more than somebody else."

"Well," I said, "I don't think much of that."

Trainor gave a variant of Gordon's explanation in the *Adelaide Register*, 20 September 1886: "Well, Trainor, you see, when a man wears a green coat he is expected to do something out of the common."

But 6 June 1887 *The Register* reprinted a report from the *South-Eastern Star*, 3 June, when Trainor pointed out the site to the mayor of Mount Gambier for a planned memorial obelisk: 'Mr Trainor, who was present at the time, did not see the jump, being in advance with the other members of the party, Gordon having, as was sometimes his wont, lagged behind.'

In *Mount Gambier: The City Around A Cave* Les R. Hill quotes a recollection of the incident by N. A. Lord in March 1913. Nathan Lord was a local businessman who, like Trainor, came from the United States: 'Just before we passed the dry crater of the Devil's Punchbowl, and without a word, Learmonth wheeled his horse off and sent it clambering down the almost perpendicular sides. He rode back again, but how he did it, I do not know. It was due to that incident that Gordon did his famous leap.

'Learmonth said to Gordon, "There, that licks you."

'There must have been some rivalry between the two. Gordon said nothing, but continued to ride on until he branched off around the post-and-rail fence which protected the cutting from the Blue Lake, then went down the bank for a certain distance, and rushed his horse up to the fence, jumping clean into the road. That was the celebrated leap. A great many people think he jumped from the road down towards the lake bank, but it was not so. He leaped from the banks of the lake into the road and in coming over the fence the animal fairly wriggled in the air. It was the prettiest jump I have seen. There was another alleged witness named William Trainor, but he was a long way behind, and could not have seen the jump.'

C. R. Wilton asked Maggie about the leap in *The Advertiser* interview. She said: ‘I generally went out with him when he was riding, but I was not out with him that day. It was a “pounding” exhibition. The party had been challenged to jump all the obstacles he cleared. Up till that jump the other riders had done as well as he did. When he came to the spot now marked by an obelisk, erected in 1887, he, in a spirit of emulation, cleared the fence on the edge of the lake and then jumped out again. He must almost have turned his horse in the air, for the landing was very narrow. No one followed him in that leap. I cannot remember the name of the horse he rode on that occasion nor who was with him.’

Wilton added: ‘Mr. Bradshaw Young was one of the party, and he saw Gordon leap back into the road, although he did not see the first jump. However, there was no way to get the horse in except by jumping, and his attention had only been distracted for a minute.’

Whatever the details and whether anyone actually saw it, it was a famous leap. In 1969 it was featured in Ripley’s ‘Believe it or Not’.

It is generally agreed to have occurred on 27 July 1864, according to Hill, the day after the Border Handicap Steeplechase at Mount Gambier: ‘the three contestants were, in the order of finishing, Robert Learmonth, William Trainor, and Gordon.’ In a version of ‘The Fields of Coleraine’ from ‘Hippodramia’, in the *Hamilton Spectator*, 19 April 1865, Gordon wrote:

Bob Learmonth’s the chap on whom you must clap

Your tin, if you’ve any to sport, sir;

When Ingleside goes through his horses, and shows

In the front rank, he’ll never be caught, sir.

The Learmonths were wealthy pastoralists. Mikhail Lermontov, the Russian novelist who died in a duel in 1841 and whose novel *A Hero of Our Time* was so admired by Clarke, was descended from a member of the same Scottish family who had entered the Russian army in the seventeenth century.



25 September 1862 Kendall wrote to Charles Harpur somewhat dismissively of the Stenhouse circle: ‘I know Mr Stenhouse: he introduced me to Henry Halloran a few weeks ago. The last-mentioned gentleman magnificently patronizes me, and endeavours to impress upon me the “fact” that it is a crime to write when you can’t excel. What a pity it is that he don’t follow up his theory in his own case, and leave me to take care of myself! I cannot find anything at all approximating to genius in Halloran’s or Evelyn’s writings. Parkes had a poetical temperament evidently and Michael is not so contemptible as interested critics would have him appear to be. Dr Woolley, a *crammed* man who admires Tennyson by rote, and Browning backwards, is another of my would-be patrons. I have cut them all.’

The poet Henry Halloran, born in Cape Town in 1811, recalled the young Henry Kendall in Sydney in a letter to Alexander Sutherland, 10 November 1891: ‘Attracted by some verses published in the *Herald* I called on the late Mr John Fairfax a friend of mine, and learned where Kendall was to be found – a small draper’s shop, I think in Pitt Street. I called and saw him and,

learning that his pay was very small, I offered him work (deed engrossing in the Surveyor-General's Office where I was then Secretary and Cashier). He declined and went with a Mr Michael, a clever attorney (a poet also of some pretensions) as his clerk to Grafton on the Clarence River.'

James Lionel Michael, born in Wandsworth, Surrey, in 1824, had been a friend of Ruskin and Millais. Arriving in New South Wales in 1853, he practised law in Sydney, with a house in Burwood. In 1861 he settled in Grafton, where Kendall joined him in February 1862. From April 1862 Kendall's poems began to appear in the weekly *Clarence and Richmond Examiner and New England Advertiser*, often the same poems he was publishing in *The Empire* and the *Sydney Morning Herald*. A number of legal documents copied in Kendall's distinctive hand are preserved in Mitchell Library and the Clarence River Historical Society's Schaeffer House in Grafton.

James Tyrrell records J. Sheridan Moore's recollection of introducing Michael to Kendall 'whom he received as an affectionate elder brother would a younger one from whom he had long been separated'. In *Poet Kendall: His Romantic History (from the Cradle to the Hymeneal Altar)*, Mrs Hamilton-Grey quotes a description of Michael: 'He was not a very tall man, but he was big made, of robust appearance. Dark in complexion and with a Jewish caste of countenance. He was a great ladies' man, and had the reputation of being something of a flirt.' Michael had separated from his wife, and in 1864 his son Jemmy was boarding with Kendall's mother in Sydney.

It was with Michael that Kendall developed his literary knowledge. Michael, his obituary in the *Sydney Empire* recorded, 'was the author of *John Cumberland, Songs without Music* and a farce *The Heiress*. He also published a translation of Béranger's songs, and Molière's *Le Medecin Malgré Lui*. Mr Michael contributed many valuable articles in the *Month* (Sydney magazine), and to the local press on the Clarence.' In a letter to Alexander Sutherland, 22 August 1882, Kendall's widow Charlotte described Michael as 'a great scholar and eminent lawyer. I have heard Mr Kendall say that he learned more from him during his residence there. He had the use of his magnificent library.'

Kendall recalled Michael in 'About Some Men of Letters in Australia' in the *Australian Journal*, October 1869: 'He had read everything, and forgotten nothing. All his vexed life, the man was a student. He did not confine himself to the domains of aesthetics; he became an enthusiastic votary of science in her various forms; and he followed that fair sister of literature and art, in the character of a devoted disciple, till he had no thought or devotion to give.' Sutherland writes in Turner and Sutherland of Michael's influence on Kendall: 'He encouraged him to read, and gave him the best poets of the English language with which to form his taste. Kendall never took with any thorough relish to the old Elizabethan writers, nor yet to Milton. He formed a poor opinion of Dryden and Pope. But at this period he filled his fancy full with the work of Shelley, Mrs Browning, and Tennyson. Michael encouraged him to learn French, and he read enough of Béranger and Victor Hugo to be able greatly to prefer the latter.' 25 March 1865, Kendall wrote to Mrs Selwyn, the wife of the vicar of Grafton: 'The more I know of men and books, the less faith I have in Mr Michael's abilities. He appears to me to be a smart chatterbox who has a happy knack of persuading everybody that he knows everything. He is undoubtedly

clever, but not original in the least particular. I have never heard him say a beautiful thing yet, that was his own.' However, he continued: 'I think Mr Michael by reason of his extensive reading, it likely to be a most useful man in Grafton – that is, if he will make the right endeavours. Yet, it must be confessed, I have not the ancient faith in his gifts. His verse is feeble and his prose flippant.'

Kendall repeated his characterization of Michael in 'A Colonial Dinner Party', in *The Australasian*, 2 April 1870: 'Michael had the happy facility of persuading almost everybody that he knew everything.' The following year he was writing the same thing about Clarke in 'A Colonial Literary Club'.



Kendall's ambitions were not confined to Australia. He sent off work to London, to the *Cornhill*, which was unresponsive, and to the *Athenæum*, which, 27 September 1862, published three poems – 'The River and the Hill', 'Kiama', and 'Fainting by the Way' – together with his accompanying letter of 19 July 1862: 'The enclosed papers will have travelled 16,000 miles when you receive them, and on that account I hope you will read them. I am an Australian, and a self-educated one; hence there may be technical errors in what I send. Their immaturity must be passed over for the reason that I have not reached my twentieth year. In a maze of "crude imitations" perhaps, if there is anything holding out a promise of future excellence, tell me of it. Don't turn from me, as others have done, because I am a native of a country yet unrepresented in literature, but *read* what is sent before you condemn. Rejecting the magnificent patronage of *our* would-be literary magnates, I appeal to a greater authority for kinder treatment. If there is hope, give me some encouragement by noticing me in your journal; if there is none, I shall be satisfied with your decision. I cannot send any later writings, because they are too long and too Australian to be cared for by Englishmen. But even in these, which were written while in my eighteenth year, I have striven to be original. And a very good opportunity I have had, being not in a position to afford to buy books, and living out of reach of them, in the backwoods of the colony.'

The *Athenæum* commented: 'We think better of Mr Kendall's verse than the usual receipts from Australia. Mr Kendall has much to learn; but he has received from nature some of that strong poetic faculty and power which no amount of learning can bestow. The spirit of nearly all the writings under our hand is dark and sorrowful, but of their energy and vigour there can be little doubt ... Most readers who examine the structure of these pieces will agree with us, that a man who can execute such work at the age of twenty, may hope in his riper years and experience to be heard of again in the world of letters.'

Kendall had trimmed a bit off his age; he was now twenty-one.



Kendall was back in Sydney for six months in July 1862, and his first book *Poems and Songs* was published by subscription in October. The title page announces it was published in Sydney by J. R. Clarke, 356 George Street, and in London by Sampson Low, Son, & Marston, Ludgate Hill,

but a copy in Fisher Library, University of Sydney, has the London imprint crossed out and a note by Kendall stating ‘the book was never sent beyond the colony’.

Subscriptions to *Poems and Songs* had come in slowly, but eventually 369 copies out of the 500 printed were sold before the publisher went bankrupt. Kendall lost money on it. 24 October 1862 it was reviewed in the *Sydney Morning Herald*: ‘We are always happy to receive fresh flowerets for the chaplet of Australian poesy, and it is thus with feelings of unaffected pleasure that we take up the neat little volume of poems recently published by Mr Henry Kendall, some of whose compositions (distinguished by their smoothness of versification and elevated turn of thought) have already appeared in these columns. Mr Henry Kendall is a poet of much promise, a native of New South Wales, whose inborn genius has already gained for him a respectable standing as a colonial writer, and who is, doubtless, destined, at no very remote period, to assume an honourable place amongst the constantly increasing ranks of British authors. Already the English *Athenæum* has made favourable mention of the name of this young Australian ... One very pleasing characteristic of his writings is the obvious fact that he delights to draw his imagery from Australian scenery, and is evidently thoroughly familiar with its distinctive peculiarities, and its many singular beauties – and deeply impressed with that vague and dreamy tone of thought generated by a personal contemplation and consideration of all that is to be seen in the wilds of the bush, whether in the pathless solitudes of the interior or in the woody mist-laden glens of our picturesque coast scenery. Mr Kendall resided, we believe, for some time in the beautiful southern district of Kiama, and expatiates with all a poet’s enthusiasm upon the glorious scenery with which that secluded and lovely locality everywhere abounds; its rugged barrier of mountains, its pleasant, rolling hills, verdant valleys, pretty homesteads, and sparkling streamlets something rather unusual in Australia, seem to have awakened in the soul of the young Australian all the spirit of poetry ...’

‘This volume represents the highest point to which the poetic genius of our country has yet attained,’ G. B. Barton wrote in *Literature in New South Wales* in 1866: ‘In the whole range of English descriptive poetry, there is no writer to whom Mr Kendall can be said to bear the slightest resemblance. He is essentially original in this respect. The music to which he has set his impressions of Nature is invariably of a gloomy and despondent tone. One would think he had been “lost in the bush” at an early period of his life, and thus had learned to associate thoughts of horror with the fairest scenes. No poet in the language, from Chaucer to Tennyson, draws such dismal meanings from the external world.

‘Mr Kendall’s poems, however, are the production of true genius. They have not yet met with the popularity they deserve – perhaps they never will be “popular” – but there is ground to believe that the author will, in time to come, take rank among the poets of the age ...’

A copy of *Poems and Songs* in the Mitchell Library in Sydney has been amended by Kendall: ‘I have in this copy made the alterations which are to be adhered to in all future editions of the poems altered. Many of the pieces are struck out. Let them be forgotten. Platitudes and pleonasms won’t go down with readers even in Australia. I was very young then when the following pages

were published. There is much in them that I now ignore; and much that may be always remembered by me gladly. They are the sincerest records of dead emotions.'

There is a further note signed 'Henry Lawson of *The Bulletin*': 'I bought this book in November 1895 in a second hand book shop in Castlereagh Street, Sydney, kept by W. McNamara. The alterations notably those on page 113 which are decided improvements were not adopted by P. J. Holdsworth's edition of Kendall's *Poems*. I consulted Holdsworth who was not previously aware of the existence of this book. Some of Kendall's friends or relations will doubtless be able to throw some light on its history.'



From December 1862 until April 1863 Kendall was in Grafton again. Victor Daley recalled in 'Pilgrimage', *The Bulletin*, 9 August 1902: 'Kendall lived at Grafton in his earlier years. Old residents to whom I have spoken on the subject seem to have but one recollection of him. He arranged to give a lecture on Australian literature – an easy matter in those days, one would imagine. When the time arrived he came upon the platform, glared at the audience, gasped – and fled. The chairman on the occasion rose to the rescue with an address on beetles, or some other nauseous but interesting vermin, entitled "An Hour with a Microscope." This is practically all that the eldest generation of Grafton remembers in connection with the sweetest of Australian singers.'

James Michael was not alone in Grafton in having cultural interests. The School of Arts was formed in 1856. A weekly newspaper, the *Clarence and Richmond Examiner* had been established in 1859 and the new proprietor, Richard Stevenson, who had bought it in 1861, published Michael and Kendall regularly. Mrs Selwyn, with whom Kendall corresponded, was an accomplished artist, and a number of her water colours of Grafton and district are preserved in the Clarence River Historical Society's Shaeffer House in Grafton. Another local artist was the German born Conrad Wagner. His painting of a desperate settler and family on a makeshift raft inspired Kendall's poem 'Waiting on the Raft, suggested by "Scene in the Great Clarence Flood 1863"' by Conrad Wagner Esq'. A print of the painting and Kendall's manuscript poem are preserved in Schaeffer House. Wagner's studio was later taken over by his son-in-law, the photographer John W. Lindt.

Michael had become secretary of the Grafton School of Arts in September 1862, and 19 December Kendall lectured there on Shelley. 30 December the *Clarence and Richmond Examiner* reported his talk in full: 'Shelley considered selfishness to be the poisonous burr of society; and with selfishness he carried on unmitigated war to the last. His heart rebelled against the greediness and tyranny of the few and bled for the slavery of the masses. And he saw with sorrowful eyes the long procession of his more unfortunate fellow men plodding on gloomily to their graves, conscious of their rights, groaning under imposed burdens, and yet too ignorant to act, too degraded to rise and to throw the unjust yoke off ...' He lectured on 'The Lyrics of Wordsworth' in January 1863, reported in the *Examiner* 3 February, and on 'Robert Burns and his Writing' in March, reported in the *Examiner* 10 March. *The Athenæum*'s recognition of

Kendall was reprinted in the *Examiner*, 3 February and the following week the *Examiner* carried an advertisement for Kendall's *Poems and Songs*, citing five 'extracts from the English press' – the *Athenæum*, *Literary Examiner*, *Scotsman*, *Lloyd's London Newspaper* and the *Manchester Guardian*.

Kendall's poems were well thought of but he was in debt, probably as a consequence of the publication of *Poems and Songs*. Reed in his dissertation quotes a letter to J. Sheridan Moore from Grafton in March 1863: 'Don't allude to the past in future letters. I left Sydney recklessly for I was unavoidably involved in debt; and to Sydney I shall not return until all debts are paid. I never owed ten shillings before 1862, and the thought of my inability to do away with a gloomy fact is distressing. Confound all literature! The pen now burns my fingers. I shall slowly and peaceably settle down into a mere money-grubber; and therefore don't allude to the past.'

James Tyrrell records in *Postscript* how around this time 'Michael contemplated publishing a third volume of his poems called *Miscellaneous Verses*. Kendall was given the task of copying the various verses which Michael selected for inclusion in the proposed third volume.' Tyrrell had acquired the manuscript: 'No lover of Kendall can remain unmoved as he turns the pages of two exercise books in which Kendall, in that characteristic script of his, copied his employer's poems. So neat and accurate is Kendall's handwriting, so well set out and artistic is his script, that it could very well have been used as the typeface of the book that was never printed. The inclusion of two poems in the exercise books by Kendall with the same title "To the Author of *John Cumberland*" suggests that Michael intended to use one of them, probably the longer of the two, as a dedicatory poem – a great honour to one so young and unknown, and proof of Michael's high opinion of Kendall's latent talent.'

Kendall was polite but unenthusiastic about Michael's poetry. In 'About Some Men of Letters in Australia' he wrote: 'He had been a voluminous verse writer; most of his productions were effects of that thin lyrical faculty that perishes in the heat of the actual.' They were, Kendall remarked, 'marked with an elegant scholarship; but, like most men who try their hand at verse, he stood shivering on the brink of beauty, without the power to go further.'

Kendall published one of his poems to Michael, 'To the author of *John Cumberland*'. J. S. Ryan notes: 'originally dedicated to Michael, within a month of its publication in the *Clarence and Richmond Independent and General Advertiser* (April 12) Kendall would retitile and rededicate the poem "To Charles Harpur" (in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 May 1863).'

I would sit at your feet, for I feel
I am one of a glorious band
That ever will own you and hold you their chief,
And a monarch of song in the land!

Kendall had begun corresponding with Harpur, a fellow native-born poet some quarter of a century his senior. Harpur wrote to Kendall 10 June 1866: 'If you knew how lonely I am here, I think you would write to me somewhat oftener than you do.' They kept in touch by letter for six years, though did not meet until about six months before Harpur's death. In 'Men of Letters in New South Wales' Kendall recalled: 'Charles Harpur was a son of the forests – a man of the

backwoods – a dweller in wild and uncouth country; and his songs are accordingly saturated with the strange fitful music of waste and broken-up places. Here was a singer whose genius was ripened – so to speak – by the sun and winds of outside wildernesses: mountains were his sponsors; and from them he received his lyrical education.’

Kendall wrote some fifty poems in his two periods of residence in Grafton, Reed calculates. At the end of April 1863 he returned to Sydney, where, Donovan Clarke records, the family were living in Newtown at Kingston Street and then Wellington Street, later moving to Silver Street, Marrickville, an address which Kendall referred to as St Peter’s, Cooks River. At some point he briefly joined his twin brother Basil in Dungog, 240 kilometres north of Sydney.

There were family problems, however, particularly in relation to Basil. 8 August 1864 the *Sydney Morning Herald* published a public notice. ‘CAUTION. It having come to my notice that a relative of mine (taking advantage of a remarkable likeness, which he bears to me) has been impersonating me during the past month, and borrowing money from my friends. I am obliged to adopt this course to the public, to prevent further frauds. Henry Kendall. Cook’s River.’

‘After his return to Sydney Sir J. Robertson obtained for him a situation as clerk in the Lands Office,’ Charlotte Kendall informed Sutherland, 22 August 1882. 25 August 1863 the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported: ‘The friends and admirers of Mr Henry Kendall whose exquisite contributions to the columns of this journal are read with pleasure by many, will be glad to learn that the Minister for Lands, hearing of Mr Kendall’s desire for official employment, promptly nominated him in an existing vacancy in the Surveyor General’s department. We trust that the appointment may prove as profitable to Mr Kendall, as we are convinced it is creditable to the Minister.’

Henry Halloran is said to have been instrumental in Kendall’s obtaining the position. It was made permanent the following January at a salary of £150 per annum.

Kendall wrote to Harpur, 19 August 1863: ‘I see Mr Halloran every day. I am employed in the survey offices. H. H. is a queer fellow. Every morning he calls me in, and treats me with an emphatic recital of his latest. I could no more do the like with my verses than fly.’ Nonetheless he wrote a tribute ‘To Henry Halloran’ in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 17 September 1864:

Remembering you, in ardent summer nights,
And Stenhouse near you, like a fine stray guest
Of other days, with all his lore of lights
So manifold and manifest!

Then hold me firm. I cannot choose but long
For that which lies and burns beyond my reach;
Suggested in your steadfast subtle song
And his most marvellous speech.

Halloran responded with a poem in the *Herald*, 27 September 1864, prefaced with lines from *Ezekiel*: ‘Neither be afraid of their words, though briars and thorns be with thee, and thou dost dwell among scorpions’.

There is a warfare which we have to wage,
 More urgent than to lie upon the slope
 Of blossoming leas, and pass from youth to age
 Dreaming of fame with wild delusive hope: -
 It is with Wrong and Cruelty to hold
 Incessant strife without truce or stay;
 To smite the smiters insolent and bold,
 Despite their brazen fronts and feet of clay
 To strive for Truth, and Charity, and Love ...

10 October 1864 the *Sydney Morning Herald* published the second part of an extensive article on 'Australian Native-born Poets' which dealt at length with Halloran and Kendall: 'One great merit of Mr Kendall's volume, and a quality we are delighted to find in it, is that it is racy of the soil. No more hopeful characteristic could be found in a young poet; no nobler merit in an old and laurelled one. Whatever be the gifts of a lyrical poet, he has no better chance of recognition everywhere than being true to the inspirations of his own home.' The English *Athenæum* published more of Kendall's poems in 1864 and the following year a broadsheet, *At Long Bay: Euroclydon*, and an eight page chapbook, *The Glen of the White Man's Grave*, were published in Sydney, the latter by Hanson and Bennett.

In 1864 the Kendall family were living at Cook's River. 'Quite in the bush,' he wrote to Mrs Selwyn, 9 April 1864: 'The front verandah of our cottage faces a broad sweep of the river, near Botany, and the back opens in to a large commons.' 23 July 1864 the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported on a lecture he gave at St Peter's schoolroom, Cook's River: 'The audience consisted chiefly of the members of the leading families in the neighbourhood – the majority, of course, being ladies. After the lecturer, in an eloquent and earnest prelection, had spoken of the necessity of love for the attainment of knowledge and the gain of happiness, he proceeded to speak of the several conditions of that which he called "a bright truth set against dark truths." The different portions of the discourse were clearly and forcibly rendered – the part referring to "love between the sexes" drawing forth especial applause.' 17 September 1864 the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported him lecturing in St Mary's schoolroom, Waverley: 'The Rev. Stanley Mitchell presided on the occasion, and introduced the lecturer, who began by remarking that the adequate nature of things was rarely comprehended, and results seldom justified expectations. Three fourths of the mistakes and misfortunes of the world, he said, were the effects of incomplete views and deficient expression. The only remedy for incomplete views was love. The only cure for deficient expression was love. The nature and the first principles of love did not trouble us generally. The mother, he continued, loved her child because it was part of her physical and psychical entity. The youth was content to know that he loved the maiden – he did not often trouble himself about the why and the wherefore. Age loves youth because of its suggestiveness. The man loved the woman because of the sympathetic harmony in both which must commingle and be wedded together, even as "perfect music" is "wedded unto noble words." After dwelling upon the several

conditions of love, and their relationship to life, he concluded with an earnest peroration, and sat down amidst much applause.’

Eighteen years later, the Rev. Mitchell officiated at Kendall’s funeral.

¶

Tenison Woods recalled of late 1865: ‘About this time the representation of the district became vacant and I persuaded Gordon to allow himself to be nominated for the electorate. A great many of the residents of the country around had become acquainted with his qualifications. Some fugitive verses with his name attached had appeared in the colonial papers, and some of them had such real merit as to attract notice. I had always spoken of him, amidst our small community of those days, as a man of uncommon attainments and ability. The electors were searching on every side for a local representative, but this was difficult to find, where every squatter was too busy for anything but his station work. Adelaide was 300 miles away; means of communication were nearly confined to a week’s ride overland. Gordon was the only man who had the time and money for the work, and he was unanimously fixed upon. A requisition was forwarded to him, but he declined to stand. As fresh instances were made, he consulted me on the subject, and I prevailed upon him to accept the position. I must say that my advice was mainly for his own sake. I thought it would give him occupation, which he evidently needed, and might open to him a successful, if not a brilliant career. I must own, too, that he had shown a tendency to a morbid melancholy about which I was not without apprehensions. He used to complain a good deal that he was not in any useful career. That his life was being wasted, and so forth, and he indulged more and more his solitary habits, walking and riding alone, or sitting for hours by the seaside.’

11 January 1865 Gordon received a deputation asking him to stand for the South Australian parliament against the attorney-general, Randolph Stow. George Riddoch recalled: ‘Stow was identified with the crusade against the squatters, to break up their runs, and Gordon stood for the same interest as John Riddoch, who was one of the leading squatters, though neither he nor his colleague, Gordon, were extreme in their views.’

In ‘Exodus Parthenidae – the Lay of the Last Squatter’ Gordon wrote:

And I guess it’s all UP with the squatter;
 The people are crying aloud for the land;
 They’ve made it hot, and they’ll find it hotter
 When they plough the limestone and sow the sand.
 ‘All flesh is grass,’ so saith the preacher;
 ‘All grass is ours,’ quoth Randolph Stow
 Is the man related to Harriet Beecher?
 With *mobile vulgus* he’s all the go.

Harry Stockdale recalled in *The Argus*, 17 May, 1919: ‘Gordon being perhaps the most popular man in the south east of S.A. was, when he came into his small fortune persuaded to stand for Parliament and I think I never heard a poorer attempt at public speaking, than his. Still, he was cheered to the echo at Robe and the other little townships. His opponent Randolph Stow,

Attorney-General for South Australia, was a man famous for his oratorical ability and high culture, but Gordon's popularity won the day. In one of his best speeches he said: "I know you all, and you all know me: I know your wants as you do yourselves, and I will attend to them." Then with a brief Latin quotation down he sat.

'At another meeting at Mount Gambier he said he was a firm believer in liberalization, but not in the teaching of different creeds: he would like to see formal religion left out of the schools altogether. I have heard him privately express a similar opinion. I only heard Gordon make two or three speeches; and in each, or certainly in two of them, he gave his hearers to understand that he would do for them what he honestly believed to be best, but they could make up their minds he wasn't going to be at the beck and call of any of them. No matter how friendly they might be, he refused to be bound to anything or anybody.'

In 'The Early History of Mount Gambier' in the *Adelaide Register*, 28 April 1923, the Rev. John Blacket recalled: 'At another meeting at Mount Gambier, after a Latin quotation, Gordon wound up his speech in these words: - "The very men who now raise the cry 'Down with the squatters!' will be the first to change their tune to 'Down with the farmers!' 'Down with everyone but ourselves.' 'Every man for himself!'

"Let the weakest go to the wall,

"And Old Nick for us all.

"Such is the desperate creed," Gordon said, "of a chartist and demagogue, to which no man of sense will subscribe, and which every man of conscience must utterly repudiate. Jack Cade and Wat Tyler," said he, "long ago paid the penalty of their folly, but their breed is not yet extinct; some of these are still among us, ever ready to fan the flame of discord and confusion – ever ready to sow the wind for us to reap the whirlwind –

"And plenty of fools will hilloo and hoot

"Wherever such knaves are found,

"For thorns will bring forth thorny fruit,

"And thistles will spring from thistle root

"As long as the world goes round."

Gordon was elected 1 March 1865. Blacket records: 'Finally Gordon came out at the top of the poll. The result of the voting was – Gordon, 378; Riddoch, 370, Stow, 367.' Gordon wrote in 'Hippodramia':

Like Stow, at our hustings, confronting the hisses

Of roughs, with his queer Mephistopheles' smile.

The election was not without its excitement, according to contemporary newspaper coverage cited in *The Wayfarer*, 20 December 2011. At the Criterion Hotel in Robe an Irishman set fire to a flag proclaiming 'Vote for Stow and Gordon', and the landlord had him in charge for attempting to burn down the building. The charge was dismissed, as were charges that five men tried to stop a coach carrying one of Stow's supporters in order to prevent him from voting. The men had to pay court expenses and compensate the driver. After the election result was announced a procession of celebrants organized a torchlight procession with an effigy of Stow composed of

straw, sand, old clothes and a little powder that they planned to burn, but it was intercepted by some of Stow's supporters who rescued the effigy.



John Riddoch, who was elected with Gordon for the Victoria district, became a life-long friend. So did his brother George Riddoch. Blacket records in *The Register*, 17 March 1923: 'George's station Koorine, part of the Glencoe run, was the poet's home when he chose to make it such.' An obituary on his death in 1901, republished in *The Wayfarer* (20, 2011), records that John Riddoch was born in Aberdeenshire in 1827, and emigrated to Victoria in 1851. Initially a gold-digger at Bendigo, he became a successful storekeeper and gold-buyer, expanding to Geelong and Ballarat. In 1861 he had acquired a property at Yallum in South Australia, and in the 1890s established the Coonawarra Fruit Colony, from which the Coonawarra vineyards developed. He was five years Gordon's senior.

Gordon took up his seat on 23 May 1865. Maggie recalled to *The Advertiser*: 'we removed to Adelaide, and took a house, formerly occupied by a doctor, in what is now Penzance Street, Glenelg, and continued to live there until Mr Gordon grew tired of Parliament, and resigned. The building has long since disappeared. There were scarcely any houses at Glenelg then, and he travelled backwards and forwards to Adelaide by coach.'

In Turner and Sutherland Sutherland describes the house, close to the sea: 'a rambling, one-storey building, for which the poet had much affection. It was a weather-board place but roomy, and it stood in about three acres of land, partly occupied by an old orchard, and partly adorned by a number of large and much-contorted gum-trees. He was able to ride into town without difficulty, and regularly started off about nine in the morning for the Parliamentary buildings. The House never met till late in the afternoon, but in Gordon's eyes the good library to which he now had access was a strong attraction. So soon as the room was open he used to settle himself down for a long day's enjoyment. He read the poets with untiring zeal, but made likewise long incursions into the realms of history. A good book of travel or exploration would keep him absorbed ...'

And he took books home. In *Responsible Government in South Australia*, Gordon D. Combe lists Gordon's library borrowings from 8 June 1865 to 3 October 1866: Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, Macaulay's *History of England*, *Illustrated Home Management*, Derby's Homer, *Romance of the Peerage*, Dugald Stewart's *Works*, *Life of Assheton Smith*, Trevelyan's *Cawnpore*, Grantley Berkeley, Trevelyan's *Competition Wallah*, and Marshman's *Life of Havelock*.

Edwin Gordon Blackmore recalled in *The Age*, 3 June 1899: 'How did I come to know Gordon? Well, in this way. Soon after my arrival in South Australia, he was elected one of the members for the South-Eastern district. At that time I was Parliamentary librarian. Walking into the library one afternoon he asked me if I had a copy of Horace handy.

'I said, "No, but why?"'

"Well, I remember the first line of a stanza in the *Odes*, and I can't get any further."

"If you will repeat it I daresay I can supply what is wanting," I observed.

‘He gave me the line. It was either from the “Pastor cum traheret” or “Mercuri facunde nepos,” anyhow from the first book. So I finished the ode for him. In those days I could say the first book right off and most of the second, so here was one bond between us. Then he claimed relationship on the ground that all the Aberdeen Gordons were one family, and, as it happened, my mother was of that stock and my great uncle was Adam Gordon. Adam, by the way, is the modern form of “Edom” of ballad days. You remember the ballad “Edom o’Gordon.” Then when he found I could ride a bit, and was a great lover of the horse for his own sake as he was, the bond was still “further strengthened.” We soon became inseparable companions. He was living at that time in a very nice little cottage at Glenelg, and often as the House rose he would come to me in the library and propose we should walk the seven miles home, where a bed was always ready for me. And as staying the night meant a swim in the sea next morning, I was nothing loth.’

Blackmore, born at Bath in 1837, had emigrated to New Zealand with his parents, where he fought in the Maori wars. He became library clerk to the South Australian parliament in 1865. In 1869 he became clerk assistant in the House of Assembly. In the 1890s he published a number of books on parliamentary procedure and constitutional law. In 1901 he was appointed the first clerk of the Commonwealth Senate and clerk of parliaments.



Sir Langdon Bonython’s reminiscence of Gordon in parliament was reported in *The Argus*, 23 April 1915: ‘I heard Gordon deliver his now famous speech in the House of Assembly. That was in 1866. It has been very properly said that it is a question whether the speech was an English speech, with Latin quotations, or a Latin speech with English quotations. I remember as a lad being aghast at so much Latin. The speech did not attract any special attention when delivered. Gordon was not then, as he is today, the great Australian poet. He was rather looked on as an eccentric, who by some accident found himself in Parliament. I can now see Gordon as he spoke, and I can point out the exact spot where he stood in what is now the parliamentary library, but was then the Assembly Chamber. He was tall and thin and rather gaunt looking. He was not dressed at all like a member of Parliament. I don’t exactly know how a member of Parliament ought to dress, but Gordon was essentially a horsey man, and as such he appeared on the floor of the House. There was, however, no question that he was both a gentleman and a man of education.’

The speech was reported in the South Australian *Hansard*, 6 June 1865: ‘Sir, last week the Government and this honourable House after a long discussion and a great deal of speechifying – good, bad, and indifferent – passed a resolution in favour of an amendment of the hon. member for East Adelaide, which amendment I had the honour of supporting; and I may here observe that upon the occasion to which I allude I came into the House prepared to support the motion of the hon. member for the Port, but it was proved to me that if the motion was good the amendment was something better.

‘I cannot understand the policy which would cast a resolution one day and the next day knock it upon the head. It looks to me like labour in vain, and calls to mind the legend in the Greek

mythology, where Sisyphus is engaged in continually rolling a stone up a hill – an employment in itself probably agreeable, but decidedly monotonous – (a laugh) – or like the snail in the schoolboy’s problem, which goes up the hill two inches by day and falls back one inch every night; but there at least some progress is made.

‘Our motto is “Advance” – “*vestigia nulla retrorsum*” – and shall we emulate that renowned commander who with 20,000 men, marched up a hill and then marched down again? You may talk about Goyder’s valuations, annual leases, &c, from noon till dark, and it’s a matter of sublime indifference to me personally whether “Trojan or Tyrian,” squatter or anti-squatter gain the ascendancy.

‘Now they tell me that the squatter must go to the wall. Well, it won’t hurt me, that’s one comfort; and perhaps, who knows, in those halcyon days to which the hon. Treasurer tells us we may now look forward, when the *ad valorem* taxes are repealed, when the blessings of free distillation are reaped by the public in general and by the teetotallers in particular, when railways and suchlike utopian luxuries flourish in the South-Eastern scrub – in short, when we enjoy a sort of colonial millennium – who knows, I say, but that some of us in the fullness of our hearts may devise some scheme to shorten the period of rebuke and blasphemy to which we have been justly doomed – the condemned class, the *enfants perdus*, the *morituri*, the squatters.

‘It is absurd for the squatters to say that the course we are pursuing is not legal. If not so already, we can pass an Act to make it legal. Sir, the Government can confiscate your property or mine, and make that legal by an Act. They may make it law, and if it is law I presume it is justice. But I’ll be hanged if they can make you or me call it justice; at least they wouldn’t make me.’



Gordon was now appearing in the Melbourne weekly, *The Australasian*. In 1866 he published two poems there and three poems in *Bell’s Life*, one of which, ‘Ye Wearie Wayfarer’ appeared over eight parts, and contained one of Gordon’s most quoted passages:

Life is mostly froth and bubble,
Two things stand like stone,
Kindness in another’s trouble,
Courage in your own.

Queen Elizabeth II quoted from it in her Christmas message in 1992, her ‘*annus horribilis*’ and the London *Daily Mail*, 2 September 1997, reported that Princess Diana quoted the lines at a breast cancer fundraising event in Washington DC; according to Martin Amis in *Experience* she used to claim that they were her favourite poem. Kingsley Amis rewrote them:

Life is mainly grief and labour,
Two things get you through.
Chortling when it hits your neighbour,
Whingeing when it’s you.

In his memoir *After Many Days* Cuthbert Fetherstonhaugh recalled: ‘We may thank Tom Clibborn for “Banker’s Dream,” for did he not produce some more than passable doggerel verses

of his own for Gordon's delectation the night before one of the Great Western meetings? Whereupon Gordon said, "Tear it up, old man, and I'll scribble you a lay myself," and thereupon on a few old envelopes he put together "Banker's Dream" which duly appeared in the *Hamilton Spectator* and proved to be a very good forecast of the race.' *Bell's Life in Victoria* published 'Banker's Dream' and 'Ex Fumo Dare Lucem' in 1867.

Tenison Woods recalled: 'He spoke of trying to get literary employment on a newspaper, and had made up his mind to resign his seat in Parliament and go to Melbourne to reside. He had at this time published some more verses which had gained for him quite a name. He was very proud of those efforts, and I noticed more self-assertion, and, if I may use the expression, more personal vanity about his talents than ever I observed before. He said, amongst other things, that he was sure he would rise to the top of the tree in poetry, and that the world should talk about him before he died. He made great use of the Parliamentary library. All his spare time was taken up in reading classics and the best English and French poets.' The last time they met, Tenison Woods recalled, 'the conversation turned upon novel writing, at which he was going to try his hand.'

At the end of 1865 Gordon made his will, preserved in W. Park Low's papers: 'This is the last will and testament of me Adam Lindsay Gordon of South Australia Gentleman – whereby I give devise and bequeath unto my dear wife Margaret all my real and personal estate whatsoever and wheresoever of which I may be seized possessed of or entitled to at the time of my decease whether in possession reversion remainder or expectancy – to hold the same unto and to the use of my said dear wife and her heirs for her and their own sole use. And I appoint my said dear wife sole executor of this my will hereby revoking and making void all other and former wills by me at any time heretofore made and declaring this only to be my last will and testament. In witness whereof I the said Adam Lindsay Gordon have hereunto set my hand and seal this third day of December in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty five.'

It was witnessed by Walter Craig and Edward Moore, both of Ballarat, where Gordon often raced. Captain Moore was an Irishman, secretary of the Ballarat Turf Club and the commanding officer of the Ballarat Volunteers, which Gordon later joined. Craig was the proprietor of Craig's Hotel in Ballarat, the birthplace of the Victoria Amateur Turf Club. 'Craig's pony' features in 'Banker's Dream', part four of Gordon's 'Hippodramia'. Gordon was to lease the stables and livery business from Craig's Hotel two years later.

After eighteen months in parliament Gordon resigned. Maggie told *The Advertiser*: 'He soon became weary of public life. He was too quiet and reserved for that kind of existence, and the necessity of attending regularly at sittings of the assembly was very irksome. He stood it until November 10, 1866, and then he resigned, and we went back to Robe. We stayed for some time with Mr Bradshaw Young, who then had charge of the gaol at Robe.'

John Riddoch recalled in *The Advertiser*, 19 August 1895: 'My colleague was a very ready speaker, but he was not an orator. He was immensely popular everywhere he went. He had a remarkable memory, and after listening to a speech could repeat it all off almost word for word. He used to amuse himself a lot when the House was sitting in writing verses and making sketches, but he did not find the political atmosphere particularly congenial. Immediately after he

resigned his membership he went over to West Australia, where he did a little exploring and took up some land there. He bought sheep and put on it, but the country was unsuitable, and the man he left in charge knew nothing about sheep farming, the result being that Gordon lost all he put into the venture.'



At the beginning of 1866 Henry Parkes became Colonial Secretary of New South Wales. Born in Warwickshire in 1815 and brought up in Birmingham where he was an apprenticed ivory-turner, he came to New South Wales in 1839. He set up an 'Ivory Manufactory and Toy Warehouse' in Sydney, established, and lost, *The Empire* newspaper, and in 1854 had entered politics, in due course becoming premier of New South Wales five times. A marble statue of him was erected in 1897 at Parkes and Hamilton Drives, Centennial Park in Sydney. Damaged by vandals and taken into storage, in 1996 it was replaced by a bronze sculpture by Alan Somerville. Parkes had published two collections of poems, *Stolen Moments* (1842) and *Murmurs of the Stream* (1857), and Kendall traded on this literary aspect of the politician's life to seek his patronage. In her letter to Sutherland, 22 August 1882, Charlotte Kendall recalled that Parkes 'used to take him for a few days now and then to his country seat'. Kendall wrote to Parkes as a fellow poet, 25 January 1866: 'I do not like to take advantage of your present position by assailing you with more applications for your influence in my favour. But there are others to be considered and I must make a sacrifice of my delicacy ... I believe the few friends of Australian literature now left would be very grateful to you for any kindness you might bestow on me.'

19 February Kendall wrote again, this time with the suggestion that maybe he should run for parliament: 'Mr Halloran and others sometime ago urged upon me the "desirableness" of my being in the Assembly. I somehow think I would be useful there. Do you think it would be wise to risk it at the first possible moment? I certainly cannot afford to go in now. You may laugh at me, but this thing is a dream of mine. Although I am poetically given I have by no means neglected political social and statistical literature.'

Parkes responded tactfully the following day: 'As to the question you raise of changing your mode of life I could not honestly advise you to think seriously of this for the present. You can well afford to wait for a few years.'

The friends of Australian literature certainly thought highly of Kendall. G. B. Barton wrote in *The Poets and Prose Writers of New South Wales* in 1866: 'Judging from what he has already written, his genius lies wholly in a lyrical direction. He has manifested power in no other form of poetry: but in so young a writer, it is impossible to decide the limits of his power. The lyrics he has written are by far the finest that have yet been written in Australia. They are distinguished by perfect harmony of versification, as well as by force of conception; and altogether they form a nearer approach to what we conceive to be genius, as opposed to talent, than any other poetry we have yet produced. Should he live to realize the anticipations that have been formed of him, his name will reflect a lasting honour on his native country.'

27 February 1866 the London *Athenæum* published two more of his poems, 'Ghost Glen' and 'Song of the Cattle-Hunters', and offered some words of encouragement: 'If Mr Kendall continues to exert his faculty as successfully as he has done in these two pieces, England, as well as Australia, will gladly recognize his place as a singer ... He occupies virgin soil, stands in the midst of a society whose characteristics have never yet been mirrored in song, while English writers are throwing up their pens yearly because they can assimilate nothing new. Let him seek in the great life around him those human forms of humour, pathos and beauty which, touched by the gifted hand, cannot fail to win the hearts of the public; and let him use his local colouring – a precious treasure – to illustrate truths which are universal.'

William Bede Dalley quoted the comments when he reviewed Kendall's last book in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 January 1881, remarking: 'Since the bestowal of this honest advice, and the expression of this deserved and encouraging eulogium, the object of it has had a hard and continuous struggle with the stern realities of life. He has had, certainly, no lack of opportunities for the intense study of "forms of pathos" and his education as a poet has seemingly not been deficient in the elements of suffering and sorrow.'

But that was still to come.

In April 1866 Kendall borrowed £25 from Parkes; in October, unable to pay back the final £5, he borrowed a further fiver. 19 December 1866 the *Sydney Morning Herald* announced in the *Government Gazette*: 'Mr Henry Kendall to be a clerk in the Colonial Secretary's department.'

The position, worth £250 per annum, was obtained through Parkes' patronage. Ten years later in 'Government Clerks in Gotham', *The Freeman's Journal*, 5 January 1878, Kendall recalled somewhat ungratefully how Parkes 'transferred me, with my coppers and pawn ticket, to his office – the swell department of the service. At this distance of time I am not uproariously grateful to the Hon. Henrico. When I took up my position at his damned desk I was a youth with Apollonian locks. When I left it I was fit for the Liverpool Asylum.'

The *Sydney Punch* found the possibilities presented by the three literary Henrys in governmental office irresistible, and published a succession of amusing speculations on their activities. 26 January 1867 it offered a play in heroic couplets, 'An Hour in the Colonial Secretary's Office':

Parkes – Poetic pair, I'm charmed, but ah! The clerks returning
Warn me it's time that you your screw were earning.
That Jones, my Halloran, 's been drunk six times –
Just write and say he's sacked, in double rhymes.
Your task, my Kendall, be't this afternoon
To write six different sonnets to the moon.
For me, your strains have roused the latent Muse;
I feel her power, and think I'll take a snooze.

The realities of the literary life were rather more grim. Kendall recorded them, 23 March 1867, with a poem 'In Memoriam Daniel Henry Deniehy' in *The Australasian*, some eighteen months after Deniehy's death at the age of 37:

Speaking low of one who failing, suffered all the poet's pain,

Dying with the dead leaves round him – hopes which never grow again.

In 'About Some Men of Letters in Australia' in the *Australian Journal*, October 1869, Kendall wrote further: 'Of Deniehy, I can state but little from personal knowledge, and that little is not worth the recording. I fell in with him a year or so before his death, at a stage when his physical and mental powers were all but gone. Nevertheless there were some flashes of the old light in him even then. When the spirit came upon him, as it did on rare and fortunate occasions, his wasted face was wont to become like the face of one glorified. I have been in his society in moments when his countenance, plain in repose, has caught a fire and beauty that looked like phases of actual transfiguration.' In *Brilliant Dan Deniehy*, Cyril Pearl quotes from a letter Kendall wrote to Harpur: 'I have little to tell you of poor Deniehy. After his return from Melbourne he lived through a few hard months in Sydney – drinking all the while – and then, for the sake of a last brave attempt at reformation, he went up to Bathurst to get out of the way of temptation. There he remained sober for about six weeks but at the end of that time, he went into the cursed drink with more infatuation than before. The result you know. I need not tell you his letters were admirable.'

There is a statue of Deniehy by James White on the Lands Department building, Bridge Street, Sydney.



Around this time Kendall is said to have been in love with Rose, daughter of *The Empire* publisher Samuel Bennett.

But, Rose Lorraine – ah, Rose Lorraine,

I'll whisper now where no one hears.

If you should chance to meet again

The man you kissed in soft dead years,

Just say for once 'he suffered much'.

And add to this 'his fate was worst

Because of me, my voice, my touch', -

There is no passion like the first.

A. G. Stephens claimed in 'Kendalliana – III' in *The Bulletin*, 9 July 1930: 'Henry and his Rose were two petulant persons; and a legend of their parting was recovered by Louisa Lawson when she came to Sydney in 1884, two years after Kendall's death. The legend declares that Miss Rose was a passenger on the train which went to open a new railway station – possibly the line to Mittagong – in March, 1867, and Master Henry came to the station at Redfern to see her gallantly off – not himself being a passenger. They exchanged affection through the carriage window, till Rose dropped her gay parasol out of the window and said: -

“Pick that up, Harry!”

‘Harry said: “Say please.”’

‘Rose said: “Pick that up, Harry!”’

‘Harry said: “Say please.”’

‘Rose wouldn’t say please, the train moved off, and, though Harry ran after the moving carriage with the parasol, Rose had taken the huff and Harry had accepted the huff, and the rift widened to a final parting.’



Gordon was in West Australia from December 1866 until March 1867. On his return he gave up the Glenelg house, settled in Mount Gambier and resumed his former life, publishing in *The Australasian*, *Bell’s Life* and the *Border Watch*. To begin with Gordon’s poems were either anonymous or pseudonymous and there may be verses that have never been identified, but in 1867 he published four in *The Australasian* signed A.L.G., two with ‘South Australia’ appended.

Tenison Woods joined Gordon in the pages of *The Australasian* in 1866 and 1867 with letters and articles on the physical geography, flora and fauna of Australia. Margaret Press records that he was elected to the Royal Society of Victoria, proposed by Baron von Mueller and Father Bleasdale. In May 1867 he drew up the rules for the Sisters of St Joseph, and the order opened its first school to educate the children of the poor and working class in Adelaide in August, headed by Mary MacKillop.

Apart from writing, Gordon occupied himself in steeplechasing. He rode at Ballarat in April and August 1867 and at Melbourne in October. Maggie told *The Advertiser*: ‘He never betted, and he never rode for money, but he trained and raced horses, and that is an expensive pastime. When he lost a race he lost money also ... He was a “gentleman rider” always, and he never took money for his services.’

The Australasian, 14 December 1895, declared: ‘With regard to Gordon’s steeplechase riding, Mr Robert Power wishes us to state that Gordon was an amateur in the strictest sense of the term, and neither directly nor indirectly received payment from him for his jockeyship. There were no half-share arrangements for either training or riding. So far as Mr Power knows, Gordon never took payment from anyone.’

‘Gordon never received a farthing for riding,’ Frank Madden reminisced in Humphris and Sladen. ‘We were very particular in those days, and if he had ever taken money for riding he would not have been allowed to ride as Mr Gordon.’

In the racing reports in the press, he was always Mr Gordon, while professional riders in the same race were referred to by their surname alone.

Sometimes Gordon received substantial prize money. W. Park Low writes in *The Real Adam Lindsay Gordon* ‘that one time Gordon won 300 sovereigns in a Ballarat steeple chase. On his return he handed them over in a chamois leather bag to Maggie but she refused the gift, so later he gave her a £300 gold brooch, the raised centre holding a brilliant butterfly studded with precious stones, which she wore on all special occasions.’

W. Park Low’s papers preserve the only known letter of Gordon’s to Maggie, written from Ballarat, April 1867: ‘My dear Maggie, I am quite well and I hope that when this letter reaches you I shall be on the road or nearly so – I was detained at Hamilton one day and yesterday I was delayed a little by the weather which was awful here rain in torrents – I hope you are well and

strong and in good heart, I shall be home very soon. I have got the old white horse. He has been trucked about a great deal and I should like to ride him home, he will take me to Hamilton nearly as quick as the coach and I will get a fresh hack at Penola – I have heard nothing from Young yet, but I suppose *no* news is *good* news so I am tolerably content. Give my kindest regards to Mr and Mrs Young. Yours v. sincerely, A. Lindsay Gordon.

‘Ps. Excuse this scrawl – I did not know that the back of the paper was scribbled on – I shall write again tomorrow.’

The scribbling on the back of the paper was a list of twenty-eight poems. It looks like a preliminary list for the collection he was preparing for publication. Some are marked by a single dot in the margin, some by two dots, others by a dash. The order and contents vary somewhat from the collection published a couple of months later.

20 April 1867 Gordon wrote to Blackmore about a race he had won on Cadger: ‘The only thing that dampened my hopes was the knowledge that I did not deserve to win, as I had no business to ride, Mrs Gordon’s health being very precarious at the time and still.’

Two weeks later in Robe, 3 May, Maggie gave birth to a daughter, baptized on 7 June as Annie Lindsay Gordon. There is a photograph of her aged four months in the Park Low papers.



In a letter to *The Argus*, 28 November 1923, Kenneth Binns reported on his researches in the Commonwealth Copyright Office to establish the dates of Gordon’s publications. 10 June 1867 *Ashtaroth, a Dramatic Lyric* ‘by the Author of *Sea Spray and Smoke Drift*’ was published by Clarson, Massina & Co., Melbourne. On 19 June it was followed by a second volume, *Sea Spray and Smoke Drift*, ‘by the Author of *Ashtaroth*’, published by George Robertson, Melbourne. Two books from two different publishers within a fortnight of each other, each declared to be by the author of the other, but the author’s name not given in either of them. Each edition ran to 500 copies, and each cost Gordon £50.

The publisher Alfred Henry Massina was born in Stepney in 1834. In 1854 he broke the terms of his apprenticeship to the London printers Waterlow’s by marrying, and emigrated to Australia. He worked for W. H. Williams for a while, and then in 1859 joined Clarson, Shallard and Gibb in a printery at 85 Bourke Street East. Ronald Campbell writes in *The First Ninety Years: The Printing House of Massina, Melbourne, 1859 to 1949*: ‘Regrettably little is known about Massina’s partners. Gibb and Shallard were practical printers, but Clarson, although his name stands first in the style of the firm, appears to have been a horticulturalist and journalist rather than a tradesman. He was one of the founders of the Horticultural Society’s garden at Burnley, and wrote a great deal on the subject, his books on the orchard, the farm and the kitchen garden being for long standard works in their field. It is possible that he provided most of the capital to start the new firm. Five years later the firm became Clarson, Massina & Co. and moved to 72 Little Collins Street.’

George Robertson, born in Glasgow in 1825, had learned bookselling with William Curry and James McGlashan in Dublin, before emigrating to Melbourne in 1852. John Holroyd writes in

George Robertson of Melbourne 1825-1898: Pioneer Bookseller & Publisher: ‘The first important literary work to appear was Adam Lindsay Gordon’s *Sea Spray and Smoke Drift* in 1867.’

The Argus noticed *Ashtaroath* on 3 September and *Sea Spray* on the 19 September. *Men of the Time* for 1882 records that Richard Birnie, one of those figures of Bohemian ruin barely surviving in Melbourne by journalism, reviewed *Ashtaroath* in *The Argus* and as a result gained Gordon’s friendship, Gordon remarking, ‘Birnie has found out beauties of which I myself was unaware.’ *Bell’s Life in Victoria* noticed *Sea Spray* on 5 October: ‘There is no mistaking the distinctive impress of the gentleman and scholar. He has an ear attuned to rhyme; his language has a lyrical flow, his epithets a picturesqueness as charming as unexpected!’ But not all notices were so positive: W. Park Low’s papers preserve a dismissive one: ‘We have received a copy of a volume of poems by a Mr Gordon. We can only say that it reflects great credit upon the printer, the binder, and the paper-maker.’

George Oakley reviewed both books in the *Colonial Monthly*, September 1867, in his round up of recent publications, ‘Book World by Evelyn’, together with work by Dante, Emerson and Matthew Arnold: ‘The colonial productions are *Ashtaroath* by the author of *Sea Spray and Smoke Drift* and *Sea Spray and Smoke Drift* by the author of *Ashtaroath*. *Ashtaroath*, an operatic tale of the feudal era, is a composite bit of artistic tessellate, consisting of a series of songs, connected by dialogue of an inferior order; reminding one of those oddly arranged entertainments of the Christy’s, in which “Where my love lies dreaming” is in unpleasant proximity to the “Blue Tail Fly.” It contains an incantation scene of a kind somewhat resembling Byron’s “Manfred,” but which is totally deficient in the weird horribleness so distinctively characteristic of the cauldron tableaux in *Macbeth*, or the more artificial ones in Ben Jonson’s *Masque of Queens*. Some of the songs are pretty; proving that the author’s faculty is lyrical, not dramatic, but the termination is unimpressively abrupt. *Sea Drift* is a collection of translations, tales of chivalry, fugitive verses of sentiment, and sporting “tips.” There are pieces on Burke and Wills and the Melbourne Cup, a variety of descriptions of the Light Cavalry charge at Balaclava (a long way after Tennyson), a metrical prophecy, and a nicely-written soliloquy of a troop-horse. Altogether it is one of the oddest literary curiosities issued from the colonial printing-press, and deserves encouragement at the hands of those whose tastes incline to “horsey” sport.’

These were themes that strongly appealed to Gordon, Harry Stockdale recalled in *The Argus*, 17 May 1919: ‘Gordon had a great idea of joining or forming an Australian exploring party and asked me, young as I was, if I would like to go. He often talked of the explorer Burke, and I heard him say he was as game a man as ever walked; he said he was sorry he was not one of Burke’s party. This was in Melbourne. I witnessed the Burke and Wills public funeral in Melbourne in 1863 ... I never saw Gordon so moved as when he spoke of the gallant Nolan who was killed leading in the charge of the Light Brigade. I shall never forget his words. “That man died a death the gods might envy. Let never a tear his memory stain.”’

The two books were published anonymously like everything Gordon published. That was how a gentleman published. T. A. Browne likewise concealed his identity beneath the pseudonym Rolf

Boldrewood. But Gordon did not keep his authorship a secret from his friends. He wrote to Blackmore: ‘*Ashtaroth* is reckoned by all the judges here as far and away before *Sea Spray* although a great deal of *Ashtaroth* was written hurriedly and much of it is bosh still the best parts of *Ashtaroth* are better than the best of the other, besides some of *Sea Spray* is downright drivel.’ And he wrote to Trainor from Ballarat in August 1867: ‘I will send you a volume of my poems when they are ready, but you must not *lend them* or you will spoil their sale.’



Kendall was regularly satirised in the *Sydney Punch*, and is generally believed to have been the author of a twenty-page pamphlet attacking that journal, *The Bronze Trumpet: A Satirical Poem*, published without author’s or publisher’s name in January 1866. *Punch* responded with an attack on Halloran, whom it assumed was the author. The writers associated with the *Sydney Punch* included Daniel Deniehy, William Bede Dalley, J. Sheridan Moore, Philip Holdsworth and G. B. Barton. Despite being a frequent target of its jibes, Kendall joined the team and was able to supplement his income a little with writing for it. He recalled in ‘About Some Men of Letters in Australia’, in the *Australian Journal* in October 1869: ‘When I was a member of the *Sydney Punch* staff, the contributors used to meet once a week, over cognac and cigars, to think out a cartoon for the next issue, and to decide upon the character of the corresponding letterpress ... At those pleasant *Punch* meetings of the past, we were a Bohemian brotherhood. Poor George Morton, the editor, had his chair at one end of the table, and Mr G-bbs, the good-natured proprietor, at the other ... Our refreshments in the liquid line used to range from modest lemonade to talk-begetting brandy ...’

13 April 1867 Kendall began contributing a series of five ‘Dyspeptic Lectures’. The topics were ominously predictive. ‘Fall then in love, idiot, and as the opium eater enjoys his dream to awaken to the tortures of the damned, so will be your reaction,’ Kendall wrote in the first, ‘In Praise of Celibacy’ and he warned against foregoing it for marriage: ‘All will go smoothly, sir, until you settle down into housekeeping. *Aie!* Then look out; you’ll quarrel three days in the week, eat cold meat three days in the week, smoke in the verandah, be bound to your tyrant’s side, may not ask your old chums to your house, be despised by your servants, and sneered at and bullied by your mother-in-law.’ The last one, 22 June, was ‘Concerning Debt’: ‘You, in your turn, will have to cringe and ask time, and beg your creditors to be lenient, and tell lies, and make promises, and break your word. You will become prostrated – a slave, spurned and insulted by fellows who mayhap are not fit to be your footstool. These are what debt will do, and much more.’

Meanwhile he struggled on as a public servant. ‘They work me like a nigger here,’ he wrote to Harpur, 2 June 1867.

17 September 1867 he lectured on love again at the Sydney Mechanics’ School of Arts, where Stenhouse had just succeeded Woolley as President. After the lecture Kendall met his future wife, eighteen-year-old Charlotte Rutter, the second of three daughters of a Manchester-born doctor, John Yates Rutter, medical officer of the Vaccine Institute in Sydney, now deceased.

Charlotte wrote to Alexander Sutherland, 22 August 1882, recalling her first meeting with Kendall: 'He (Mr Kendall) always called me Lottie; he first met me at the close of a lecture he delivered on "Love." I, as well as several others, went to hear him, and I was introduced to him. My brother, whilst we were all chatting together, left me to see a friend for a few minutes – we were very much attached to each other. I left to see where my brother had gone and Mr Kendall noticed my anxiety; *the contrast in my behaviour and his sisters'* who neglected him in many sisterly attentions, struck him at once and he has since told me that he said to himself such a good sister would make a good wife. Our marriage shortly took place ... I need not say that very few women were loved as I was by him; although he had that failing he was the essence of kindness and gentleness to me always and our attachment to each other increased as years rolled on.'

Kendall wrote to her: 'You are very rarely out of my thoughts. I want to be good and clever for your sake. I should like to win all kinds of social distinction and attain to the highest point of literary excellence for the end of pleasing you. I want you to love me very much – even to the extent of a little self-sacrifice.'

Kendall's work was receiving favourable notice, not only in Sydney. In Melbourne, George Oakley wrote in the *Australian Monthly Magazine*, August 1867: 'Kendall's poetry which is as original in style as Ossian, is alone national in the sense of being evolved as it were from the country he inhabits. It is not so much he that speaks as Australia in him. His poems have a rich, lurid glow about them; like the hot wind they seem to scorch from their fiery vehemence. The lighter portions are scented with the golden blooms of the wattle, and reflect the emerald freshness of the spring.' Oakley was becoming something of an enthusiast for Kendall. He took some lines from one of Kendall's poems for an epigraph to a story of his in the *Australian Journal*, 22 February 1868.

But such positive notice was all too rare. Kendall wrote to Harpur, 8 October 1867: 'You overrate newspaper people by expecting them to see the great beauty and the genuine power of your writings. The public to which your poems will appeal is not in existence yet, but its advent is inevitable.'

And *Punch*, despite Kendall's being a contributor, kept up a regular barrage of attack, remarking 3 June 1865 'he writes nonsense' and 7 October dismissing 'the particularly-ridiculous and generally-nonsensical school of which Mr Kendall is so undeniably *facile princeps*.'



After fourteen years in South Australia, Gordon moved to Victoria. A document in the W. Park Low papers records: '10 September 1867 Adam Lindsay Gordon mortgaged to Mr R. Lawson for £1500 @ 10% interest p.a. payable half yearly 3 sections in the hundred of McDonnell known as the Dingley Dell property numbers 138, 353 and 354, 265 acres in all, and a section containing 80 acres near Mount Gambier.' £1000 was left in trust to be given to a young woman known only as Marie, fifteen years younger than Gordon, who lived at Bald Hills in South Australia. Sladen claimed she had an illegitimate daughter by Gordon. Hutton comments: 'The details of this shadowy attachment are unknown and it would be mere speculation to identify her with a woman

who wrote to Sladen telling him she had been Gordon's mistress ... Sladen withheld her name, and Gordon never mentioned any such attachment in his letters to his friends.'

22 November, Gordon used the remaining £500 raised to lease the livery stables attached to Craig's Hotel in Ballarat. The principal hotel there at the time, it was a three-storey brick building with splendid wrought-iron balconies. As Craig's Royal Hotel it is still in business, refaced with stone. A wooden plaque in the saloon bar and a circular metal plaque above the door of the Commercial Room commemorate Gordon. The four-roomed timber cottage attached to the hotel's stables in Bath Street, where Gordon first lived in Ballarat, was moved to the Ballarat Botanical Gardens in 1934. Since 1992 it has been an outlet for local crafts, the Adam Lindsay Gordon Craft Cottage, and contains some memorabilia. There is a bust of Gordon near it, and another memorial of a charging horse with the inscription 'Erected by the Adam Lindsay Gordon Society to mark the centenary of the poet's living in Ballarat, also as a memorial to the 958,000 horses and mules killed in the First World War, including 169,000 that left these shores never to return.' Beneath the bust are four lines from Gordon's 'Ye Wearie Wayfarer' and beneath the charging horse four stanzas from 'The Roll of the Kettledrum, or, the Lay of the Last Charger.'

Mark Twain wrote in *Following the Equator* in 1891: 'Forty-five years ago the site now occupied by the City of Ballarat was a sylvan solitude as quiet as Eden and as lovely. Nobody had ever heard of it. On the 25th of August, 1851, the first great gold-strike made in Australia was made here. The wandering prospectors who made it scraped up two pounds and a half of gold the first day worth £600. A few days later the place was a hive-town. The news of the strike spread everywhere in a sort of instantaneous way – spread like a flash to the very ends of the earth. A celebrity so prompt and so universal has hardly been paralleled in history, perhaps. It was as if the name BALLARAT had suddenly been written on the sky, where all the world could read it at once.'

Ballarat was the largest inland city in Australia with some 40,000 inhabitants, the third richest after Sydney and Melbourne. It was the site of the Eureka Stockade armed rebellion in 1854. Since 1862 it had been linked to Melbourne by railway, a six hour trip via Geelong. Clarke described a typical miner to Cyril Hopkins: 'He travels in the trains to Ballarat and plays euchre and brag or poker all the way up.' Clarke went there to buy cattle in 1866 and, playing billiards at the George Hotel, overheard a conversation that enabled him to make a quick profit of £433 on a sheep deal. 'I never made so much money in my life before,' he told Cyril Hopkins. Back in Melbourne he then speculated £300 of the proceeds in mining shares: 'I held on until noon next day when I sold for four hundred and thirty-seven pounds, six shillings (minus brokerage).'

Gordon's financial dealings there were not so successful. Nor were Clarke's generally. Mining speculations were the stated cause, along with starting a couple of magazines, for Clarke's bankruptcy in 1874.

Gordon had visited Ballarat a number of times, mostly to ride in steeplechases. Its economy was based upon gold-mining, but it also had breweries, iron-foundries, flour mills and a stock exchange. As well as brothels and opium dens. He and his wife Maggie and their infant daughter Annie moved into a six-room, double-fronted weather-board cottage in Sturt Street, on the

opposite side of the road from Lake Wendouree. He took into partnership a well-known young local horseman, Harry Mount – with whose brother Lambton Mount he had earlier bought the sheep run in Western Australia, which had proved a financial disaster. The stables were to prove no less disastrous. Even more so was Harry Mount's involvement in the *Carl* blackbirding episode five years later. Fetherstonhaugh lamented: 'Alas, poor Harry Mount allowed himself to get mixed up in a calamitous black birding expedition in the islands, which nearly cost him his life and resulted in his leaving Australia.' In *The Age*, 3 June 1899, 'an old friend' of Gordon's, E. G. Blackmore, recalled: 'Speaking of the Mounts reminds me of one of that family for whom Gordon had the greatest admiration as a horseman, Harry Clarke Mount. Gordon often said to me no man could handle double reins like him.'

Most of Gordon's time went into running the business. Not much time seems to have been left for poetry. *Bell's Life in Victoria* ceased publication in January 1868, but it was absorbed into *The Australasian*, a journal in which Gordon had published regularly in 1867. But he published only two poems in 1868, and they were both with Clarke's *Colonial Monthly* in November and December, after he had given up the stables.

Maggie recalled: 'He rode a little also, but not much at that time.' A letter survives from Gordon to Trainor, October 1867, about a race he rode at Ballarat and failed to win: 'Cadger was not backed by any of our party for a shilling as he was not expected to win, but I did think during the race that it was my day at last. Cadger may have been more unfit than I thought him and I *may* have made the running too sharp, but I rode the race exactly as I had meant to ride, and Craig and Moore were quite satisfied. Geo Watson says I have always been mistaken in Cadger, and he never was and never will be any good over more than *two* miles, and he may be right. Anyway I thought he shewed bottom at Coleraine when Wando won. He was very light then. But I am quite satisfied now that he will never win a fast run race, and if ever he runs again I will not be on him. He is too dangerous a horse for a man to ride over fences unless he were a wonderful good one; and he is a bad one.'

There is a memorial to Gordon on the Glenelg Highway at Coleraine: 'In memory of Adam Lindsay Gordon the great Australian poet who rode in the Great Western steeplechase, distance about four miles & crossed the road at this point, first run in 1858. The great sportsman was a contestant in this famous event for five years from 1862 to 1866. Concerning the race he wrote "On the fields of Coleraine there'll be labour in vain before the Great Western is ended. The nags will have toiled and silks will be soiled and the rails will require to be mended." Erected 1950.'



Clarke's early journalism is discussed by H. G. Turner in the *Melbourne Review*: 'Clarke was tried for a time as a writer of sub-leaders, but his facile pen had such a trick of running away with him, the temptation to literary ornamentation and epigrammatic wit were so irresistible, that he could not handle serious subjects in a judicially argumentative manner. In fact, he could never be made to subscribe to that journalistic aphorism which propounds that a leading article must have a beginning, a middle, and an end; and that these must be religiously kept in their proper places.'

But he supplied, in place of these more easily obtained qualifications, a faculty of humorous moralizing that made the broadsheet more entertaining; and he early commenced in the columns of *The Australasian* that series of papers by the “Peripatetic Philosopher,” which brought him prominently into notice.’

Cyril Hopkins recalled: ‘He wrote me that he was then contributing a series of articles to *The Australasian* newspaper entitled “Peripatetic Philosophy,” and described them as being much after the manner of Sala’s *Breakfast in Bed*, and *Twice round the Clock*, adding (parenthetically) “I wish I could write for the home papers instead of these colonial ones. I have done nothing but write, write, write since you last heard from me.”’

The Peripatetic Philosopher series was pseudonymous, though Clarke’s authorship became widely known. ‘The letter “Q,” under which he wrote the weekly contributions, was the stock brand of the station on which he had attempted to learn “colonial experience,”’ Mackinnon noted. The first column appeared on 23 November 1867, to coincide with the arrival in Melbourne of the twenty-three-year-old Prince Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh, Queen Victoria’s second son, on the steam frigate *Galatea*. ‘Though Bohemian I am loyal,’ Q announced the following week, offering some sardonic comments on the celebrations. Eric Irvin records in *Australian Melodrama* that Robert Whitworth wrote a play, *The Duke’s Arrival*, based on an episode in Adelaide when the crowds turned out to greet the wrong man. It ran for five performances at the Haymarket Theatre in November. Richard Horne offered a more reverent tribute to the Duke with his ‘odaic cantata,’ *Galatea Secunda*, with music by Joseph Summers, though the Duke did not attend the performance.

To celebrate the royal visit a free banquet was organized in Melbourne, with a whole bullock and twelve sheep barbecued, 900 gallons of colonial wine, and 3452 buns and three hogsheads of ginger beer for children. The outcome was chaos. Curtis Candler, the Melbourne coroner, recorded in his diary: ‘There was a dreadful fiasco at the “Free Banquet” this afternoon. I was just about starting for it when Standish came in with his eyes filled with dust and in the most filthy state. He told me that the crowd was something fearful, and that the police had lost all control over them. By some unfortunate mismanagement the time of the Prince’s arrival had been altered and the result was the people had got frantic at waiting in the heat and dust, had rushed the tables, and were in the wildest disorder. He had fortunately met the Prince as he was going on the ground, and had taken on himself to intercept him and prevent his going. He said that had he gone, he is quite sure that great loss of life must have ensued. Women and children must have been crushed by the crowd pressing forward to any point the Prince may have gone. Having represented this to HRH he exercised a wise discretion and turned back – delegating to Standish the rather awkward and not very gracious task of announcing that he would not appear to the unruly multitude. Standish says the scene was something grand in its tumult, uproar and confusion. They made a lane for him to the raised dais from which he signified HRH’s intention of not appearing. The announcement was the signal for the wildest disorder. The platform was rushed, and he was nearly being thrown down. His faithful “bobbies,” however, sallied round him and he at last got away.’

Candler also records: 'Standish told me the Duke had received an anonymous letter, warning him against himself – stating that he was a notorious gambler and was associated with disreputable characters on the Turf &c – winding up by saying that the writer did not sign his name because if by accident Capt S. should learn it, such was his vindictiveness he should not consider his life safe &c. The Duke showed the letter to S. himself.'

Meanwhile, the Prince had other interests to be catered for. De Serville, drawing on Standish's diary, records in *Pounds and Pedigrees*: 'Both as Chief Commissioner of Police and as a man of the world, Standish was employed to be of service to the Prince, although the first mentions of the Royal visitor in his diary are almost offhand in tone. The day after the *Galatea* arrived, two of the Prince's suite, Lord Newry and Eliot Yorke, dined with Standish at the Club, and afterwards he took them to visit Mrs Fraser. A casual reader might suppose her to be a fashionable Melbourne hostess who gave suppers at London hours. A fashionable hostess of a kind, Mrs Fraser undoubtedly was; she conducted the most sumptuous and well-appointed brothel in Melbourne.'

9 December 1867 the Duke made an official visit to Ballarat. He stayed at Craig's Hotel, and Pacini's history of the Victoria Racing Club records that Gordon arranged special horses for the Duke. 20 December the Duke returned for an impromptu visit to the Ballarat races. At some point he drove a team of four horses onto the racecourse. Gordon came third in the handicap steeplechase.

Maggie told her son, W. Park Low, that when Gordon took over the stables he bought the Duke of Edinburgh's carriage and pair, and all the silver mounted harness and mountings connected with it, which required a lot of cleaning and looking after so as to be ready at a moment's notice.



The Peripatetic Philosopher column in its liveliness and irreverence was immediately successful, and ran for two and a half years. Clarke's career as drama critic was less successful. Mackinnon records: 'After an initiation into the mysteries of a newspaper office, the young journalist was allotted the task of theatrical reporter, which routine drudgery he performed to the satisfaction of his employers, till one night he took upon himself to criticize a performance by Mr and Mrs George Case, which, unfortunately, through the indisposition of the lady, did not come off. As might be expected, that watchful contemporary of *The Argus*, *The Age*, did not fail to draw marked attention to the somewhat disconcerting fact that *The Argus* was in the habit of reporting events that had not taken place, and in consequence its reports were not altogether reliable, though ingenious. This carelessness on the part of the imaginative critic led to his withdrawal from *The Argus* reporting staff, and ever afterwards his relations with that paper and *The Australasian* were that of a contributor.'

It was the end of Clarke's only staff position on a paper. For the rest of his life he wrote as a freelance.

Charles Bright in *Cosmos*, 30 April 1895, adds a few further details and variations to the episode: 'He was regularly engaged on *The Argus* staff, and besides writing articles for its

columns, undertook the business of theatrical critic. His duties in this latter respect came to an abrupt termination, due to his erratic disposition and apparent inability to work steadily at any settled vocation. He was deputed to furnish a notice of a concert at one of the Melbourne halls. It was a second-rate programme, and as most of it was already familiar to the gentle reporter, he thought he could write about it quite as well without experiencing the tedium of attending, as if he had sat there the evening through. So he spent the hours pleasantly with two or three congenial companions, and having satisfied his conscience so far as to verify the fact of the concert having taken place, he penned his paragraph. There was one particular song which he knew was always detestably rendered by the performer whose name was set against it in the programme, and Clarke made the most of his chance of slating him. His criticism was vigorously written, of course, but it unfortunately happened that on this occasion the condemnation was hardly merited. The first thing that Clarke's eyes lighted upon in the morning was a notice of the same concert in a rival paper, stating that Mr So-and-So was unhappily prevented from fulfilling his engagement by a severe cold. Clarke found himself immediately suffering from a cold still more severe, and was little surprised when he received a notification from the newspaper office informing him that his services on the reporting staff would no longer be required. He still continued, however, to do valuable work as a contributor.'

Charles Bright, born in Yorkshire in 1832, had been a journalist on *The Argus*, and editor of *The Examiner*, before it was absorbed into *The Australasian* in 1864. He edited the *Melbourne Punch* from 1863 to 1866 and was now on the parliamentary staff of *The Argus*. He recalled meeting Clarke at around this time in the Café de Paris: 'A fellow-journalist by my side remarked, in an undertone, "That's Marcus Clarke," as a slight, boyish figure, daintily attired, hastened past and disappeared through the swing-doors leading to the dress circle of the Theatre Royal. I had heard of him as a notable addition to the literary staff of *The Argus* and *Australasian* but had not previously seen him. Later on that same night he reappeared in company with Walter Montgomery, the actor, who, in his *grand seigneur* style, brought him up, remarking "Charley, my boy; you ought to know Marcus"; and the introduction was duly celebrated in the customary style. I noticed as a peculiarity of the newcomer that he partook of absinthe, a drink rarely called for by any but Frenchmen, and I asked if he liked it.

"Not particularly," he said, "but I'm experimenting with it. They say it'll drive a fellow mad in a month and I want to find out if that's a fact. I've tried opium-smoking, and rather like that. There are a lot of lies told about these things, you know, and we have scriptural authority for proving all things and holding fast that which is good. I can't say yet if absinthe be good, or not."

'His voice was pleasant to listen to, and he appeared to have a slight difficulty in getting out his words – not a stutter, but an approach to it – which, like Charles Lamb's fully-developed stammer, gave an added charm to his talk. Still, I cannot truthfully affirm that I was greatly attracted by him that first night of our acquaintanceship. It was distasteful to me to find so young a man – he was then about one-and-twenty – so cynical and, apparently, so *blasé*. When I came to know him better I discovered that much of this cynicism and indifference was but skin deep. At heart, he was open to all human sympathies and alive to every generous aspiration, but it took

time for an outsider to get there, and at first one was apt to be misled by his affectation of satiety and recklessness.’

Bright described Clarke’s appearance: ‘At that time he had no hair on his face, save a soft, silken, light brown moustache, and his clear-cut features and beaming eyes were almost feminine in the beauty of their aspect. He was considerably below the middle height, yet of singularly symmetrical figure, and looked, in his carefully-fitting costumes, as a full-sized British dandy of the period might look if viewed through the wrong end of an opera-glass. It was only when he took the pen in hand that he became literally a giant. It was a noticeable fact that those who only knew him from his writings always pictured him as a big man, physically, and were astonished when brought into personal contact with him.’

Bright remarks that the photograph by Batchelder ‘gives a good idea of the author of *His Natural Life* during the latter portion of his career, but differs greatly from his appearance when he first made his mark in Melbourne journalism’. In 1973 it provided the image for Clarke’s portrait on an Australian seven cent postage stamp.

Henry G. Turner wrote in *Once a Month* in 1885: ‘The admirable photograph of him by Batchelder ... calls him up at his best. There was a curious twinkle in his eye when in the humorous vein, and a certain hesitancy of speech, almost amounting to a stammer, often gave unexpected point to a ludicrous story. To those with whom he had tastes in common he was a most genial companion and attractive talker, but he had strong dislikes, often upon most inadequate grounds. Unhappily, too, he possessed a fund of caustic repartee, not always under discreet control, that he managed, over trivial differences, to alienate many who would gladly have remained his friends.’

Turner left a description of Clarke in Turner and Sutherland: ‘In person he was below the average stature, and this, combined with his slight build and juvenile style of dress, gave him a boyish appearance which he never outgrew. The face was distinctly handsome, with regular features and noticeably large and expressive eyes. When in repose they conveyed an impression of melancholy and contemplation, but when Clarke was in a genially humorous vein – for he could be savagely humorous sometimes – they sparkled with fun, and added materially to his great success as a *raconteur*. Amongst his press associates at the Yorick Club, or other festive place of meeting, he was easily first in telling a good story, for whatever the original basis may have been, he rarely failed to garnish it with some ludicrous associations that immensely improved it. His imagination was too active to be limited by the stern necessities of facts.

‘Like Charles Lamb, he had occasionally a most pronounced stammer in his speech, and although in ordinary conversation he managed to keep it under control, it often pulled him up suddenly when he got a little excited in talking. On the whole, however, it could hardly be regarded as a serious defect, for it often gave unexpected point to some of his humorous sayings.’

And there were times that he kept quiet, Turner records: ‘when he fell among uncongenial company he was as mute as an oyster, and if he thought the occasion demanded it, he could wrap himself up in a reserve that defied all social advances.’

An anecdote by Morris Brodzky, in *The Bulletin*, 18 May 1904, records: ‘On one of the leaves of Lombroso’s *Men of Genius* which I bought at the sale of Dr Pat Moloney’s library, I found a note in pencil by Clarke’s medical friend. “Marcus Clarke stuttered. He told me that in his youth a horse had kicked him on the head.” His stuttering was very powerful to his friends, as he was on occasions absolutely unintelligible, and incapable of continuing an argument consecutively.’ Later correspondents in *The Bulletin*, however, denied that the stutter was ever that disabling.



Absinthe, with which Clarke announced he was experimenting, is a liqueur with alcohol, wormwood (Greek *apsinthion*) and anise as essential ingredients. It has an alcohol level of up to 75 per cent, and hallucinogenic qualities resulting from the chemical thujone found in wormwood. It was used as a disinfectant and anti-malarial agent by French troops in North Africa and Indo-China and achieved cult status in mid and late nineteenth and early twentieth century French literary and artistic culture. It is represented in the work of numerous artists, including Degas, Gauguin, Van Gogh and Picasso, and in Marie Corelli’s novel *Wormwood* (1913).

Opium, which Clarke also said he had tried and rather liked, had similar cultural associations, including its use, sometimes in the form of laudanum, by Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Thomas De Quincey, Walter Scott, Bulwer Lytton, Wilkie Collins and James Clarence Mangan. In Australia, Adam Lindsay Gordon used opiates. So did Kendall, taking laudanum and chlorodyne, a patent anodyne medicine containing opium, chloroform and Indian hemp. Charles Dickens wrote about a London opium den in *All the Year Round* in 1866, and used to take a shot of laudanum before his public readings. Opium was readily available, as Geoffrey Blainey in *Our Side of the Country* and Michael Cannon in *Life in the Cities* record. There were eighty opium shops in Victoria in 1868. Fifty thousand pounds of it were imported into Victoria each year, and there was some local cultivation of the opium poppy. It was the basic ingredient of Holloway’s Pills and other patent medicines. Gordon advised in ‘Ye Wearie Wayfarer’:

Shun bad tobacco, avoid strong drink,
Abstain from Holloway’s pills
Wear woollen socks, they’re the best you’ll find,
Beware how you leave off flannel.

Clarke wrote about opium use in Melbourne’s Chinese community in *The Argus*, 9 March 1868, in the last of a three-part series in which he had been exploring ‘Night Scenes in Melbourne’: ‘It is a common mistake to suppose that opium-smoking induces visions of extraordinary beauty. This is not the case, save in some rare instances. The influence of *hatchis*, or opium when eaten, not smoked, will have this effect, and opium-eaters revel in all the sensuous delights of dreamland; but with opium-smokers the case is different. The drug is chiefly used in the first instance to alleviate pain, or to produce a temporary excitement of the nerves, similar to that effected by the moderate use of alcohol. One pipe leads to another, and so seductive is the power of the poison, that a fortnight is long enough to rivet the chains of this terrible vice around the victim.’

Nonetheless, he gave his readers the current market price: ‘The drug is sold in little boxes, at a shilling each. Each box contains sufficient opium for three pipes. As most of our readers know the method of using it, we need not enter into minute description. The opium is prepared in the form of a paste, which has a sweet and peculiar smell, and looks much like treacle. The smoker takes it with an iron pin, and lights it in the flame of a lamp. The burning drug is then placed in a small hole in the huge clay bowl of the pipe, and the smoke inhaled through the bamboo attached. The price of a good opium pipe is about 15s. 6d.’

And then there was hashish. In the *Colonial Monthly* of a month earlier, February 1868, Clarke published ‘Cannabis Indica (A Psychological Experiment)’, describing his sampling of hashish the previous December: ‘Some time back, having read and heard of the effects produced by opium, I was tempted to try an experiment upon myself.

‘It has often struck me, that though we have accounts of the dreams and sensations of opium and hashish eaters, written *after their recovery*, no man had ever willingly given to the world a poem or story composed while under the effects of a narcotic. That there are many such existing cannot be doubted; but we cannot point to any one with certainty. I think that a story, written under the influence of hashish, may be interesting from a psychological point of view. External objects and recent marked events obtrude themselves with curious persistence into the dreamer’s visions and it is strange to trace their incoherent occurrence. The drug seems to unlock the doors of thought ...’ Some eight-five years later Aldous Huxley used a similar phrase for his account of the effects of mescaline, *The Doors of Perception*.

Clarke mentions the experiments of the French psychologist Jacques-Joseph Moreau, which led to the Club des Hashishins at the Hotel Pimodan on the Île de St Louis in Paris. Charles Baudelaire, Honoré de Balzac, Alexandre Dumas, Théophile Gautier, Victor Hugo, Gérard de Nerval were amongst those who took the opportunity to participate in Moreau’s trials with the drug. It features frequently in the *Arabian Nights*. Samuel Taylor Coleridge obtained some from Joseph Banks who obtained it from James Matra. Louisa M. Alcott, FitzHugh Ludlow, Richard Burton, W. B. Yeats and Algernon Blackwood are amongst others who have described its effects.

Clarke sought out his own medical source. ‘Anxious to try the effects of this wonderful drug, I applied to my friend, Dr – , of Collins Street, whom I knew possessed a small quantity, to give me some, stating the purpose for which I required it. At first he refused, and it was not until I agreed to permit him to prescribe the quantity of the dose, and to be present during its operation, that he consented.’

The doctor’s name is suppressed. It may have been Dr James Edward Neild, editor of the *Australian Medical Journal*, who lived in Collins Street and was, as drama critic, a fellow contributor to *The Australasian*. The doctor’s observations are incorporated into Clarke’s text:

‘17th Dec., 7 p.m. – My friend having wheeled a sofa in front of the fireplace and lain down upon it, I gave him two pills containing each about three-fifths of a grain of *cannabis indica*. He drank some warm tea after taking them. Pulse at 50. He is rather nervous and excited. For at least three-quarters of an hour I observed no visible effect. He talked rationally, and frequently asked me if I observed any change in his demeanour, and expressed a wish for the dose to operate.

‘8.15. – Pulse at 74. He complained of thirst, and dryness in the throat. I gave him some cold weak tea to drink, which appeared to relieve him. He expresses much desire to read these notes, but I refused him permission. He becomes sarcastic in his remarks ...

‘9. 15. – The drug is operating. His eyes are open, fixed, and brilliant. He smiles occasionally. His hands lie by his side, and I was obliged to prop him up with pillows. Pulse at 83. I asked him if he was ready to dictate. He said, with some apparent difficulty of articulation, “I am thinking. I shall be back directly.”

‘9. 40. – He is in a stupor. Eyes large, projecting, and unnaturally bright. Pulse 72. Skin cool, and slightly moist. Will not reply to questions. Begin to fear that all hopes of his dictating a coherent story are gone.

‘10. 30. – He has recovered from the stupor, but is evidently not in his normal state. His eyes are still bright, and he seems disinclined, or unable, to move. Pulse at 70. He says that he is ready to dictate.

‘10. 35. – He speaks slowly, with deliberation, and with apparent difficulty, but he never hesitates for a word, and seems to be rather reciting from a book than composing.’

And at this point Clarke began dictating the story that forms the second half of his piece.

Drugs were not subject to governmental control in the 1860s. The *Australian Journal* recommended: ‘Recline upon a sofa or bed, and take a pill composed of two grains of camphor and half a grain of powdered opium, every four hours during the attack.’ It also announced something that sounds suspiciously like an early version of LSD: ‘A new exhilarating product has been discovered, which presents a singular analogy to protoxide of azote. This is a mixture of ergot of rye, 5 grammes, and solution of phosphate of soda to tenth degree, 15 grammes.’

Whether Clarke used absinthe or opium after the occasion on which he mentioned them to Charles Bright is unknown. They both feature from time to time in his writing. He certainly seems to have continued with hashish. Five years after his initial experiment he has the character Marston remark in his Noah’s Ark column in *The Australasian*, 7 December 1872, ‘I sometimes experiment upon myself, and after one has eaten hashish a depression of spirit follows’; and in the Noah’s Ark column of 12 July 1873, Clarke introduces a character called Dr Cannabis.



In his first Peripatetic Philosopher column, 23 November 1867, Clarke declared of the original peripatetics: ‘These ancient *flâneurs* had a dash of the philosophy of the latter Epicureans. They preferred ease to labour, and a quiet observant walk down Athens to a wrangle with other gentlemen in broiling atria or dingy peristyles. There is much to be learnt from street life, and one’s “daily walks abroad” are instructive as well as amusing. To imitate the ancient peripatetics has long been my pleasure. I am a Bohemian ...’

Jules Noriac’s *Journal d’un flâneur* is listed in the sale catalogue of Clarke’s library. Exploring the city as a theatrical site was a nineteenth-century pastime. Walt Whitman kept a notebook recording his observations of New York street scenes. Charles Dickens used to get Wilkie Collins to accompany him around London on such expeditions on what, Peter Ackroyd records, ‘he

called their “Haroun Alrashid” excursions to dance halls and other places of entertainment. Alrashid was of course the protagonist of *One Thousand and One Nights*, the caliph of Baghdad who slept with a different virgin every night.’

An anecdote in *The Bulletin*, 13 August 1881, records of Clarke: ‘One peculiar fancy he had was to wander around the city in search of “faces.” The writer has accompanied him on many of these weird pilgrimages, which embraced all quarters of the city – from the slums about Little Bourke Street to the aristocratic precincts of Toorak. In these expeditions, the deceased author’s strangest fantasies were exhibited. For instance, he would pretend to recognize in living members of the lower orders startling portraits of dead-and-gone celebrities, whom he insisted lived again on earth in their persons. Thus a Collingwood bus driver was Julius Caesar, and a barmaid in a Bourke Street hotel the “positive presentment of Cleopatra.” In a like manner he would discover extraordinary beauty in various types of both sexes where none to the ordinary observer existed ...’

The reincarnated Cleopatra features in another *Bulletin* anecdote about Clarke told by someone calling himself Old Penjostler: ‘He was once an apostle of the sun-bath as a cure for all nervous diseases. One day he called on a friend at Carlton who was suffering from sciatica, and as there was no one else at home at the time, Marcus easily persuaded the sufferer to go into the orchard at the back, peel off everything, and ramble round *à la* Adam before the Fall by way of giving the sun a chance to soak in. The friend looked so happy that Marcus decided to have a solar wash also, and the pair were soon strolling round eagerly discussing one of those psychological subjects upon which Marcus could talk so learnedly and so seductively. No notice of time was taken until suddenly a peal of woman’s laughter was heard quite close, and a female voice called out –

“Come this way, Nellie; Charlie’s in the summer-house having a smoke, I expect. Nice fellow he is to leave in charge of a house!”

‘That closed the psychological discussion with a sudden snap, and the naked Marcus darted behind the equally naked Charlie, and holding him as a shield, excitedly whispered,

“Good heavens! What shall we do? Those women are between us and our clothes.”

“Oh, it’s all right,” said his friend; “It’s only my wife and her sister.”

“Oh, y-y-yes,” stammered poor Marcus, “it may be all right for you – you know the ladies, and besides you’re a married man, but I’m an innocent bachelor, and I’ll drop dead if they see me in this shameful state. Good Lord, here they come! Hide me! Sit on me! Shout to them to go back. Don’t stand there like a dumb ass; do something! No more sun-baths for me!”

‘The “hardened husband” gave the warning, and Marcus soon got into his clothes and over the back fence; but he never smiled again – until he found himself in his favourite Melbourne pub, trying to make the billowy-bosomed barmaid believe she had been Cleopatra during a former incarnation. (Marcus told this story to Garnet Walch, who told me.)’

Garnet Walch was one of Clarke’s associates at this time, a versatile writer of Christmas pantomimes, popular ballads and stories. Whether this story is a product of his fertile imagination or a true record of reality remains unknown.

Clarke's explorations of the city in due course bore literary fruit, with the first of a three-part series 'Night Scenes in Melbourne' appearing in *The Argus*, 28 February 1868. The literary tradition of such explorations included Charles Dickens' essays, collected as *Sketches by Boz* (1836), Eugene Sue's *Les Mystères de Paris* (1842-43) and Henry Mayhew's articles for the *Morning Chronicle* that became *London Labour and the London Poor* (1851). All three books are listed in the sale catalogue of Clarke's library. And Clarke had expert guidance. He writes in the first article, 'Melbourne Streets at Midnight': 'We have recently, with the assistance of the police, penetrated into all these places.' In the third article, 'The Chinese Quarter', *The Argus*, 9 March 1868, he is more specific about his guide: 'We need no magic horse or flying carpet to take us into China; all we need do is to turn down Little Bourke-street, and our friend F – S –, once a mandarin, now a distinguished member of the detective force, will point out to us the "manners and customs" of his countrymen.'

F – S – is probably Fook Shing. Ken Oldis details his career in *The Chinawoman*. He was 'one of the three headmen appointed by Captain Standish at the Bendigo camps' and a 'former secret society leader'. After a period as an informer he 'reappeared as a "detective" in the metropolis. He assumed the role on an informal basis before being officially appointed in early 1868'. A notorious gambler, opium addict and dealer, he claimed expenses 'spent for opium on inquiries'. Oldis notes that 'an embittered colleague described Fook Shing as doing nothing but smoking opium and falling asleep in the detective office'.

Clarke continues: 'We commenced our tour of inspection by a visit to a gambling-house. On a word from F – S – we were instantly admitted.' F – S – clearly knew the quarter well, taking Clarke next to an opium den and then an eating house: 'The horrible stench that rolled out of it gave no promise of good entertainment. Our guide, however, seemed to enjoy the odour, and endeavouring to forget the existence of such things as noses, we followed him in ... We had hoped that the cookshop would have completed the tour; but F – S – informed us that this was only the aristocratic portion of the city, and requested us to come and see where "poor fellow live."'

The final stop was at a brothel: 'The faces of the girls were of the most repulsive kind, but some spark of feeling seemed to be left in one of them, who, with some confusion, requested F – to let us know that she was not always "a Chinaman's woman." Young girls from the ages of sixteen to twenty are mostly employed in this traffic, and the old Chinaman will contract to keep and clothe them for a certain period.'

The following year Clarke extended his explorations of the city with a six-part series 'Lower Bohemia' in *The Australasian*. 'The kingdom of Bohemia is divided into two parts,' he began, 12 June 1869. Upper Bohemia was a 'land of freedom, and wit, and pleasure; sparkling with supper parties and radiant with beauty. But there is another Bohemia – very different to this; a Bohemia whose inhabitants are Bohemian indeed; where there are few suppers and no supper parties, where no songs are sung and no wine cups circulate, where vice is vice without the tinsel, and vagabondage is stripped of its poetry. This is the real Bohemia; the other is but a fictitious and

impossible place, which exists but in the dreams of the poet of the imagination of the romance writer.'

And so Clarke explored the life of the down-and-outs that most Melbournians did not know existed. The two series are in the best tradition of the exposé journalism that Mayhew had pioneered, and show the deep humanitarian side of Clarke always present in his writing. Literary and theatrical Bohemia had its real poverties, as Clarke's later bankruptcies were to show. But that was a Bohemia in which there was always hope – of writing another play, another article. It was a Bohemia of choice, even of make-believe. However, it was all too easy to slip from the literary Bohemia of choice into the lower Bohemia of destitution from which there was no return. The recurrence of this theme in Clarke's writing suggests that he was writing as much for himself as his audience, warning himself of his own possible fate.



The Theatre Royal, where Charles Bright was introduced to Clarke, was one of the sites of theatrical bohemia. It had opened in July 1855. It had cost £95,000 to build, and had an audience capacity of 3300. The building measured 91 feet by 313 and covered an area of upwards of half an acre. The three-tiered interior was illuminated by 600 burners fuelled by the theatre's own 7000 cubic feet gasworks. The original owner was John Black, but in 1856 it was taken over by the entrepreneur George Coppin and his partner Gustavus Brooke. Felix Spiers and Christopher Pond became licensees of the hotel, and established the Café de Paris, a lavish upstairs restaurant with facilities for billiards, coffee drinking and reading newspapers. On the western side of the vestibule, doors led into the Royal Hotel where, at a 150-foot bar, drinkers were served by girls in tights.

The Café de Paris soon became a focus for Melbourne's theatrical, literary and journalistic worlds. Clarke described it in 'A Day in Melbourne', his account of showing a New Chum round the city, which he sent to Cyril Hopkins in January 1865: 'The sun has nearly set now and it verges fast upon the hour of six as we turn up the cocoa-nut fibre matted stairs of the café.

'The dining-room is a large, cheerful apartment with little recesses or rather divisions on each side, somewhat after the fashion of London eating-houses; a bright fire at one end of the room glowing through a grating of sloping bars upon which hiss and crackle several steaks. A white-coated and linen-capped cook carefully tends them with a pair of polished tongs. On the opposite side is the billiard room and to the right of the door leading into it a bar where a slim, cute-looking Yankee dispenses drinks and compounds "cocktails." All the cushioned seats in the recesses are full of people eating, drinking and chatting. Squatters, lawyers, doctors, loafers, holders of snug Government berths, actors and *littérateurs* all mixed together, whilst the incessant clatter of plates, and rattle of the huge silver covers of the joints on the mahogany stands which support them as they are propelled to the table of some hungry customer, contrast strongly with the decorous quiet of the "Wellington" or the "London." Selecting a table by the open window and calling for the *carte*, we proceed to the serious business of dining. Will the New Chum order? He will be delighted.

‘Clear soup, some mullet, stewed pigeon, cutlets *à la Maintenon*, curry, *omelette aux fines herbes*, Parmesan cheese, two bottles of claret and some sparkling Moselle.

“‘Yes sir! Thank you,” and we sit down.

‘New Chum here observes a black-browed, wavy-haired, flower-in-buttonhole’d gentleman at the middle table gazing at him with eyebrows alternately raised and depressed.

“‘Who’s that?” asks he.

“‘That, sir, is Barry Sullivan, the actor and lessee of the Theatre Royal which adjoins this building. He is a good actor and can play every part he takes with an ease which compensates in a great measure for lack of genius. His Richelieu, I think, is his best character. He is a careful manager and spares no expense to make his theatre attractive. The corpse-like individual with the deep wrinkles each side of his mouth is Charles Young, the comedian and another of the Royal Company.’”

“‘Does Sullivan play tonight?” New Chum enquires.

“‘No; Jefferson plays in Jesse Rural; if you never saw him you had better come.’

“‘Delighted,” returns New Chum, helping himself to stewed pigeon. In the pause after the discussion of the Parmesan, New Chum asks if the café as well as the theatre belongs to Sullivan? No! there is a rather curious story about that same café.

‘Suffice it to say that the theatre and café originally belonged to one person, a tragedian whose name, famous here, is not altogether unknown in London; and that from his hands they somehow passed into those of a Mr Ambrose Hawke [Kyte was his real name]. See, there is the gentleman in question entering the room; he has his cloak over his arm; he hardly ever appears in public without his cloak. And mopping his sickly face with a yellow bandana, he orders a steak and a glass of ale. He was originally a bill-sticker, I believe, and from lending small amounts at high interest became possessed of a sum sufficient to enable him to purchase houses and shops in, at that time, rising Melbourne. The discovery of the Victorian goldfields and the consequent influx of people into the city raised the value of his property to such an extent that he is one of the richest men in Melbourne. He looks carefully after his belongings too, does Mr Ambrose Hawke; if we were to watch we should see him lurking about pit and dress circle entrances, now and then casting careful eyes into the house from the orchestra and sniffing at the check-takers with suspicion in his dull eyes, fearful lest a stray shilling should find its way into other pockets than his own. Nevertheless, to do him justice, he is liberal at times and seldom refuses his name to a subscription list or his guinea to a charity.

‘New Chum here voting for “coffee and weeds,” we adjourn to the smoking-room and having carefully sugared his mocha and lit an undeniable Havana, the newcomer admits with a half reluctant sigh, “By Jove; I couldn’t have dined much better at the ‘Wellington.’” Keeping him to his promise of seeing Jefferson, we drag him away as soon as his first cigar is over, and passing through a door at the end of the smoking room, after some monetary confabulation with a hermit in a gigantic bandbox outside, we find ourselves seated in the front row of the Royal dress circle.’

After the theatre, Clarke shows his New Chum the vestibule, and something of the seamier side of things: ‘Turning down the stairs and passing through a bar and a small door we find ourselves

in a large hall open at one end to Bourke Street and closed at the other. On either side run covered bars behind which some twenty or thirty girls dispense with lightning-like rapidity the “Brandies hot,” “Glasses Ale,” “Cold without,” “Colonial Wine,” “Nobblers for five,” “Sherry and Bitters,” “Champagne,” “Two glasses Claret,” “Maraschino,” “Curaçao,” “Dark Brandy” etc. etc., which smoking, expectorating men and boys call for on all sides. Melbourne is a dreadful place for drinking; if one meets a friend, the first salutation is, “How d’ye do! Come and have a drink!” and this in all grades of life. I have seen two doctors, a distinguished lawyer, and a member of Parliament all partaking of “nobblers” at the bar of an hotel at 11.30 a.m.

‘Let us stand aside a little and watch the crowd; what a curious one it is! Nearly two hundred people, all smoking and some drinking. White-coated waiters shoot now and then like meteors through the mass bearing coffee to some of the more quiet and less rowdy frequenters of the place; these, sitting at little marble tables, smoke and drink with a philosophical air. At the furthest table from the door sit a knot of Government clerks – young Podgers of the Treasury and Pippin of the Chief Secretary’s Office. Beside them, sunk in drunken slumbers, reclines Tom Banbury of the Customs.

‘Banbury is a generally debased young man; he is nearly always drunk. The common enquiry of his compatriots, when out on the loose, on entering some more than usually vicious den, is “Seen Banbury?” “No!” “Oh! Then I suppose he’s drunk!” He is in that happy state now. Some two more friends of the group coming up and amusing themselves by fencing amicably with sticks over the ebbiate’s head, he is at last aroused to a sense of his position and, staggering up, dives into the little door just behind him where the beautiful girl in mauve silk is standing. That is the door into the Ladies’ Refreshment-room, vulgarly termed “The Saddling Paddock,” and many a merchant’s clerk and tradesman’s shop-boy has dated his downfall from the day when he entered it. Melbourne, I grieve to tell New Chum, is not a virtuous city; indeed for its size and population it is the most vicious in this half of the globe.

‘The beautiful girl sitting alone in the theatre, at once attracting the attention of New Chum, who had remarked that she was the most ladylike woman he had seen since he landed by Jove! was the “Sydney Pigeon,” a pretty “horse-breaker” of some notoriety; while the elegantly dressed women who parade Collins Street at noon, bowing to nobody, are akin to the objects of the “Seven Belgravian Mothers”’ abuse. Poor girls! They are more to be pitied than blamed. Sent out here by the shipload as governesses, nurses, ladies’ maids or what not, deluded by false representations of theoretical philanthropists into leaving friends in England for the chance of employment in the colonies, they find out their mistake when it is too late and are compelled to save themselves from a miserable death by a life of vice. If the class of benevolent ignoramuses who advocate female emigration and offer bonuses to women to leave their families and friends did but know the true state of matters here, there would be fewer cases like that of the poor girl above who sitting clad in silk and velvet with jewels on her breast, but despair and shame at her heart, endeavours by weeping at the fictitious grief of another to forget her own alas! too real sorrows!’

The Saddling Paddock was not the only haunt of prostitutes. So were the theatres themselves. In *The Golden Age of Australian Opera* Harold Love notes that when William Saurin Lyster finally enforced the often proclaimed banning of prostitutes from soliciting for custom in the stalls of the Prince of Wales Opera House a decade later, he claimed that the prohibition cost the theatre £1500 a year.



Clarke wrote about the Café de Paris affectionately a decade and a half later as the Café Lutetia: ‘Founded by a gentleman who had some difficulty in paying his bricklayers, the Café Lutetia became the resort of Upper Bohemia ... Which of our respectable married friends presumes to forget those days?’

‘I was living then in Fig Tree Court with my friend Savage, and we dined at the Café daily. We were not rich, for we had both dissipated our incomes in the exact manner recorded of the Prodigal Son. I wrote for the *Peacock*, and Savage for the *Screechowl*. We made some four pounds sterling a week – and we were really thankful (not being grocers or drapers) to earn so much. The morning was spent in scribbling, the afternoon in tobacco, the evening in dinner, theatre, and gaslight. I fear we did not lead virtuous lives. I am sure that we were often out of bed after the small hours. I know that Madame Gogo and Lisette de Jambejolie assisted in the spending of the *Peacock*’s bounty. We were utterly useless beings, but then – well, we had good digestions and did not bother ourselves with high resolves and sentimental lovemaking.’

The *Peacock* and the *Screechowl* are Clarke’s names for *The Argus* and *The Age*. He took the name of Savage for his companion Alfred Telo from that eighteenth-century Bohemian figure, Richard Savage, an account of whose life Dr Johnson memorably wrote. A later figure of Bohemian ruin, Charles Whitehead, wrote a novel about Savage, before coming to Australia and dying in poverty in the Immigrant’s Home the year before Clarke arrived. In London Whitehead had been asked to write the text to accompany a series of sporting illustrations. He declined the commission and suggested instead an unknown young journalist, Charles Dickens, who accepted, and produced *The Pickwick Papers*.

The tragic cost of the Bohemian literary life runs as an undercurrent through Clarke’s memoir of these years ‘when we were wicked and natural, and happy’. But the focus is on the happiness: ‘Savage and I dined at the extreme table next the fire, where the faithful John was waiter. Our custom was not lavish – though when we were hardest up we usually fed the most delicately; but the faithful John treated us like princes. Our lamb’s head mince, our broiled ostrich, our carbanadoed elephant, our what you will, came to us with intense regularity. Our butter was of the freshest, our cheese of the oldest, our champagne out of the most particular bin. John – or I mistake him – had a Bohemian soul. He liked the recklessness of our impecunious jollity, so openly spoken of, so little considered. The conversation was not dull – thank God, we lived every minute of our lives in those days! – and John was not impervious to a joke. When the fates were propitious we economized, when the Fates were adverse we scorned them, and pawned something. Mr Malachi Vulpino, in Balaam street, has had an old signet-ring of mine there fifty

times – 'twould do your heart good to see the twinkle with which he assumed to have never seen it before – and each time that he “advanced” upon it, Savage and I have dined upon venison and champagne. John veritably brightened up when he saw me enter without my finger-fetter, for he knew that I had two guineas in my waistcoat pocket, and would loyally spend the same. Oh, Café Lutetia! You are a profitable billiard-room now, but you have not for me the charm that once you had when I was in Arcadia ...

‘The frugal meal eaten, we would camp in a roomy sofa ... and sip coffee,’ talking with the other habitués who came in: ‘The Café Lutetia was a part of our existence. Its revelries, its follies went to make up our life; we loved, and fought, and sighed, and drank in order that we might grow (O, my dear old Savage) to be the great creatures that we are. We absorbed wine and women, and hate and love into us, that we might be able to write those magnificent articles for the *Peacock* and the *Screechowl*.’

Wattle B. reminisced in *The Bulletin*, 9 September 1893: ‘In those bygone years when Young and Jackson’s pub, Melbourne, was “Mooney’s,” it was the vogue with regular patrons to pay up scores every Friday night; meanwhile the IOUs were kept in a tumbler on the mantelpiece of a back parlour. Early one morning, after ceasing work at *The Argus*, we smuggled ourselves into Mooney’s as usual. The IOU tumbler was well patronized. As we were leaving, Marcus Clarke entered and hailed us all back. Now, Mooney adored Marcus, who presently was standing with his back to the mantel and fascinating the landlord with a well-told story. Clarke’s pipe would keep going out, and so he kept turning round nonchalantly and relighting it with a neatly-folded piece of paper taken out of the IOU tumbler. Mooney was so entranced with the narrative that he failed to notice this destruction of his “accounts.” Every time we laughed (for we clearly perceived the situation) Marcus Clarke scintillated afresh, and Mooney only thought we were convulsed at what was amusing him. On the following Friday night, at settlement time, the landlord exhibited much surprise. The week had been a hot and thirsty one. Yet, while some of the accounts were abnormally large, nine of them – Clarke had lighted up nine times! – were unaccountably small. However, these latter shared a proportion of their savings with those who had paid up forty drinks to the sovereign.’



For all his Bohemianism Clarke wrote for the conservative *Argus*, not at this stage for the more liberal *Age*. There was always a residual, conservative side to Clarke, as befitted a man who had had his expectations. As he told Cyril Hopkins: ‘My plan of life was an easy going existence as attaché to the embassy at Paris or Vienna, with a connection among the literary people ... Perhaps I had hoped also to achieve fame as a novelist myself, and now by some hard fate all is changed and I am cast out like a leper into the wilderness.’

His Scottish ancestors had settled in Northern Ireland in the seventeenth-century. His great-great-grandfather, John Clarke, lived at Grange, County Tyrone. About 1760 John’s eldest son, Andrew, married Flora Lindsay. Their sons John and Andrew became army surgeons in the West Indies, where they married sisters. Andrew became a planter in Trinidad, returning to Ireland in

1818 where he built a house called Belmont, near Lifford in County Donegal. He had three sons and a daughter. The eldest son, Andrew, was commissioned as an ensign in the army in 1806 and served in the West Indies, New South Wales and India, before being knighted and appointed Governor of Western Australia in 1846. Sir Andrew's son Andrew, Marcus's cousin, also had a distinguished military career and was also knighted. The second son, Marcus's uncle James Langton Clarke, was educated at Sandhurst, but finding opportunities for promotion in the army few, read law at Trinity College Dublin and Cambridge and was called to the bar at the Middle Temple at the age of forty-two, later emigrating to Victoria. The youngest, William Hislop Clarke, read law at Trinity College Dublin, and became a London barrister with a practice in Chancery. This was Marcus Clarke's father.

Marcus Clarke's family, like Adam Lindsay Gordon's, had a strong military tradition. However, Clarke wrote to Cyril Hopkins: 'My arm, you must know, prevents me altogether from entering the army.' Cyril quoted Clarke's friend Patrick Moloney: 'As a child he had a disease of the left humerus and a deep cicatrice nearly its whole length marked the operation of the removal of the dead bone. As a result the arm was several inches short. According to Dr Moloney, he wore a sac coat with his left hand pocketed.'

Kendall had a similar disability. He explained his left-handedness in a letter to Harpur, 8 January 1862: 'You must excuse ... the peculiar hand adopted here ... I am obliged to indict my letters in this fashion, my right arm being lame.' His son Frederick explained in a letter to A. G. Stephens, 14 February 1904: 'About my father writing with his left hand is quite correct; his right hand was maimed by having a door slammed upon it in his boyhood.'

Clarke's career alternative to the army was the Foreign Office. He wrote to Cyril: 'I was nominated to the Foreign Office and was about to go to France for three years when suddenly the whole prospect faded away!' His father, suddenly struck down with paralysis, was taken to a hospital for the insane at Stoke Newington. His financial affairs were found to be in complete disorder. Marcus, his expectations evaporated, was packed off to Australia.

Marcus wrote to Cyril Hopkins of his father's death: 'My cousins thought that he was worth at least £70,000. Judge then of our consternation at finding affairs in the greatest confusion, the house in Ireland (left him by his elder brother) sold, and only a certain sum at his banker's. Records of nothing! His cheque books showing large sums of money drawn out of his banking account with no trace of where they went to ... no one could touch the money in the bank and there was no money for me! But this money I shall get when I am twenty-five.'

Shortly before taking up a journalistic career in Melbourne Marcus wrote to Cyril Hopkins: 'I do not wish to excuse my reckless extravagance, but put yourself in my position. My whole tenor of life was changed in a moment. I was forced into a career utterly uncongenial to my tastes. I was somewhat of a "swell" (God help me!) – I was sent to the land of radicals and mob-law. I was fond of art and literature; I came where both are unknown, I was conversant with the manners of a class; I came where "money makes the gentleman." I hated vulgarity; I came where it reigns supreme ... I see daily before me a pit into which I dread to fall; the pit of vulgarity, ignorance, slovenliness and radicalism. In a word I dread lest I become like others. I have a fatal facility for

adapting myself to my company and am in hourly terror lest I fall into that most degrading of all states, the state of the man “who can be the gentleman when he likes.” The consequence of this state of things is that my mind is becoming cynical.

‘I say bitter things, laugh uproariously and sigh despondingly. I am Heraclitus and Democritus rolled into one. I ride hard because I don’t care about a broken limb. I play hard because I don’t care for money. But thank God! I don’t drink hard. Drinking is the curse of the place! I never could see any pleasure in getting drunk.

‘I am cool in manner, partly natural and partly artificial, I am egotistical because I see no one that I like better than myself, I am reckless because I cannot bear to see my inferiors in mind excel me in bodily exercises.’



Clarke’s relatives in Australia were very much part of the ruling class establishment of Victoria. His uncle, James Langton Clarke, born 1800, emigrated to Melbourne about 1855, setting up as a barrister at 40 Temple Court, Little Collins Street West. In July 1858 he was appointed Judge of Mines and of the County Court at Mount Ararat, a flourishing gold mining town. His last appointments were to conduct the General Sessions at Maryborough in 1868 and Inglewood in 1869. He left Australia in 1870 and settled at Nice and afterwards at Mentone.

Marcus’s cousin Andrew Clarke was a military engineer and public servant. Born in Hampshire in 1824, he had been educated at the King’s School, Canterbury and the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich. After government service in Tasmania, in May 1853, aged twenty-eight, he had been appointed the first Surveyor-General of the new state of Victoria, now independent of New South Wales. He undertook a policy of opening up land. Geoffrey Serle writes in *The Golden Age*: ‘Clarke went to work with such a will that in the following eighteen months more than half a million acres were sold, more than in the whole previous period from the settlement of Port Phillip.’ Serle characterizes him as ‘more liberal than his colleagues of the old regime and popular with the press and public ... Deeply interested in science and indifferent towards religion, Clarke had a streak of unconventionality. Late in life he became an Irish home-ruler. His career in Victoria was to be outstandingly successful.’ Serle adds: ‘He was known to some of his contemporaries as “Spicy Andrew.”’ Serle classifies him as a Liberal, in distinction from the Conservatives, Roman Catholics and Democrats.

Andrew Clarke was responsible for developing Victoria’s first railways. Serle writes: ‘Clarke, who for three years carried the major planning responsibility, introduced his final proposals in January 1857. He argued firmly for both state construction and operation, quoting the Belgian state-system as a model, and private railways in Britain and the United States as lamentable examples.’ He ensured that Melbourne should have a pure water supply, and was responsible for the installation of the first electric telegraph from Melbourne to Williamstown. Andrew wrote to Marcus’s father: ‘In August 1853 when I proposed the establishment of electric telegraph in this colony, I was thought a visionary and at first laughed at, and I had great difficulty in obtaining their trial as an experiment on a short line of some ten miles between Melbourne and the port of

Williamstown. Now they are extended to the South Australian frontier on the one side and New South Wales on the other. Every one of the mines and inland towns are now connected with Melbourne by telegraph.'

Andrew Clarke had entered the Victorian Legislative Council as an official representative in 1853 and later held the seat of Emerald Hill (South Melbourne) in the Legislative Assembly. Marcus has a paragraph on him in his *History of the Continent of Australia* under the year 1855: 'Emerald Hill was the first municipality to avail itself of the new law of local self-government, introduced by Captain Clarke, and since extended to every city, town, borough and shire in the colony, which has been productive of the most important results. Captain (now Colonel Sir Andrew) Clarke was the son of one of the Governors of Western Australia, and commenced his official connection with the colonies as secretary to Sir W. Denison in Tasmania. He was the first Surveyor-General of Victoria.'

Serle writes: 'The development of local self-government in 1855 greatly increased opportunities for democratic political activity ... The vital legislation, however, was Clarke's Municipal Corporations Act of December 1854 in which the English urban district was taken as a model.' Andrew wrote to Marcus's father: 'Simple and democratic in its character, this Act has done more to establish order and good government and to create a healthy conservative feeling than even I anticipated.'

Marcus's *History* also notes that in 1854 Andrew established the Philosophical Institute, which in 1860 merged with the Victoria Institute to become the Royal Society of Victoria. Serle records: 'In 1853 the Legislative Council recommended the formation of a museum of natural history, and for two years Andrew Clarke controlled the spending of generous grants for zoological, botanical and geological exhibits.' After visiting Italy on his return to England, he wrote urging the Victorian government to found the National Gallery of Victoria, and when it was established assisted in some of its acquisitions.

In his biography of Andrew Clarke Vetch notes that in 1858 Andrew, having brought down the Haines government with a proposal for unfettered universal suffrage, was invited by the Governor of Victoria, Sir Henry Barkly, to form a new ministry. He declined, since he could not see that he could command a working majority. He wrote to Marcus's father: 'To be Prime Minister for a month or two was not a sufficient temptation, nor did I desire to be the agent in exposing the country to repeated changes in its government.' He had other ambitions. His uncle, James Langton Clarke, wrote from Melbourne to Marcus's father: 'Sir William Denison has recommended Andrew for the government of Moreton Bay and he is very anxious to get it ... My own idea is that Andrew is fitter for a Governor than a Minister, and that he is better for a young colony like Moreton Bay than an older man.' The new state of Queensland was established by the novelist Edward Bulwer Lytton during his term as Colonial Secretary in 1858-59. Andrew, however, was passed over for the governorship in favour of Sir George Bowen, and left Australia in 1858. He returned to the Royal Engineers, and from 1864 to 1873 he was Director of Engineering and Architectural Works at the Admiralty. Knighted in 1873, from 1873 to 1875 he was Governor of the Straits Settlements. He is described in Makepeace's *One Hundred Years of*

Singapore: ‘A great man, popular and sympathetic, to whom belongs the fame of being the first founder of the Federated Malay States. His features, as preserved in the splendid bust in the entrance hall of the Singapore Club, are a mirror of courage and determination.’ Clarke Quay in Singapore is named after him. But the Singapore Club and the bust have vanished.



In May 1868 Marcus joined the Melbourne Club. He had the right family connections. Both James Langton Clarke and Andrew Clarke had been elected to membership. It was very much a conservative, upper-class, establishment, rich man’s venue.

Clara Aspinall described it in *Three Years in Melbourne*: ‘The Club is a very imposing-looking building, four storeys high, with countless windows of plate-glass, and though it has not the Corinthian pillars and fine architectural proportions of the Conservative at home, it still would not at all disgrace St James’s Street. Here blackballing is constantly practised, and necessarily too, as it ensures to the members the impossibility of coming in contact with any but those of unexceptionable character. Squatters and Government officers, who are members of it, make the Club their home when they come to Melbourne from the country; they can live more reasonably here than at an hotel, and have the advantage of being in the centre of their friends. Still, though all members consist of educated gentlemen, or those who by industry have raised themselves high in the social scale, there are many gentlemen of limited incomes, especially up the country, who, probably from motives of economy, do not belong to it. The entrance fee is forty guineas, and the annual subscription twelve guineas, – a consideration to those who might possibly not be able to avail themselves of its advantages once in a year. Strangers from any country, visiting Melbourne, are admitted as honorary members on being introduced by two members.’

In his *Record of an Adventurous Life*, H. M. Hyndman, who visited Australia in 1869, wrote of it enthusiastically: ‘I have always remembered my sojourn there off and on for two years. I became very intimate with many of its members and I saw from the first what not a few Englishmen coming out to the colony failed unfortunately to recognize, that before the gold fever and spirit of adventure drew them out to Victoria, many of these habitués had seen and enjoyed pretty nearly all that was to be seen and enjoyed of European society.’ In the 1880s Hyndman was to become one of the first English Marxists, founding the Social Democratic Federation, whose members included William Morris before he left to found the Socialist League, and George Bernard Shaw before he left to join the Fabian Society. A wealthy, upper-class Cambridge educated radical, Hyndman was a model for John Tanner in Shaw’s *Man and Superman* (1903). In due course Hyndman and Marcus met.

Hamilton Mackinnon wrote in *The Marcus Clarke Memorial Volume* that membership of the club contributed to Clarke’s later financial problems: ‘While thus rapidly rising in the rank of Australia’s litterateurs, Marcus Clarke was to live at a rate far exceeding his income. In other words, he became a member of the Melbourne Club, and tempted by its glitter, threw himself into its extravagant ways with all the force of his impulsive, Bohemian nature; – and, naturally, got involved in debt. From this there was no recourse but to borrow, and so the presence of the usurer

was sought.’ When the biography was reprinted in the *Austral Edition of the Selected Works of Marcus Clarke* in 1890, the specific reference to the Melbourne Club was omitted. Mackinnon’s uncle Lachlan, co-proprietor of *The Argus*, was a club member, but not Mackinnon himself.

In Turner and Sutherland Henry Gyles Turner, who was elected a member in 1880, dismisses Mackinnon’s claim: ‘This statement is wholly indefensible. Clarke was a member of the Melbourne Club for a short period, having been elected about six weeks before his marriage; but to talk of the glittering attractions of that abode of all the conservative conventional proprieties having led him astray, is simply preposterous. As a rule young men find its dullness rather oppressive, and certainly it has never given any indications of developing fastness or Bohemianism. It is true that amongst its members he would necessarily be brought into association with men immensely richer than himself in this world’s goods. But what society could he have mixed in where this would not have been the case! Unhappily, he needed no imaginary seducers to lead him into the vortex of extravagant expenditure, and the foolish friends, “his seniors in years and experience,” are but a mythical impersonation of his own weak will and self-indulgence.’

Turner elaborated on what he called Clarke’s chronic condition of financial trouble in *Once a Month* in 1885: ‘Having somewhat heedlessly entangled himself with usurers, probably without any conception of what sixty per cent really implied, he worked for years to pay the interest to his bondmasters, until it seemed that, after all, there was only bread and cheese for himself, and no reduction in the weight of the oppressive incubus.’ Turner by the 1880s was one of Melbourne’s foremost bankers. He knew what 60 per cent implied. He also knew Clarke. In 1893 he knew a few more things when the Commercial Bank, of which he had become general manager, was the first to collapse in the catastrophic series of bank failures. De Serville remarks in *Athenæum Club*, ‘The Commercial Bank of Australia, a major institution and a bank of note issue, had long been a supporter of building societies, but as its own liquidity began to dry up, it withdrew its support As institutions tottered, the Commercial Bank provoked bitter criticism.’ James Smith, the journalist and editor of *The Australasian* amongst other papers, was someone who lost all his savings in the financial crisis.



The Melbourne Club may have seemed conservative and conventional to Turner, but it had a number of members who maintained a more rakish mode of life. In *The Golden Age of Australian Opera* Harold Love sketches in something of the background of Melbourne’s upper bohemia: ‘In the sixties, among its official and professional classes, many of them sons of respectable families who had come to the colony to escape scandals at home, it possessed a “fast” set of latter-day Regency rakes for whom removal had not served as an incentive to reformation ... Sir Redmond Barry, Judge of the Supreme Court, whose elegant neo-classical town house still stands in Clarendon Street, East Melbourne, as a living defiance of everything high-Victorian, was the patron spirit of this group aided by the witty barrister-politicians B. C. Aspinall and R. D. Ireland.’

Butler Cole Aspinall was born in Liverpool in 1830, son of the Reverend James Aspinall, and educated at Merchant Taylors' School. A barrister and politician, he was a member of the Melbourne Club, and the Victorian and the Union and the Athenæum and the Yorick. A wit, a Bohemian, a gentleman radical, he, together with George Higinbotham and Archibald Michie, had defended the Eureka rebels free of charge, and achieved their acquittal from charges of high treason in 1855. He died back in England in 1875, insane and almost penniless. David Blair described him in 'Three Melbourne Barristers' in the *Centennial Magazine*, January 1889: 'Decidedly the wittiest man I had ever met with up till that date in my life. Aspinall was in addition one of the handsomest men I had ever seen. There was a stamp of Apollo the Sun-god upon the young man ...' However, Blair continued, 'the brilliant promise of my youthful colleague's early days was not fulfilled in the sequel. To tell the whole truth in a single phrase, Aspinall was the spoiled child of society. And one of its saddest victims, let it be added ... Aspinall was, out of all comparison, the favourite diner-out of that wild period. Wherever there was a jolly dinner party being held his presence was indispensable. And, truth to speak, a most dashing reckless time it was ...'

Blair offers a similar account of Ireland, born in County Galway in 1816, and educated at Trinity College Dublin: 'Richard Davis Ireland, barrister-at-law, whilom Attorney-General, leading politician, unrivalled orator at the bar and debater on the floor of Parliament, brilliant wit, and prince of dinner-table talkers ... He once told me, in familiar conversation on the benches of the Assembly, that in the course of his life – and he was not then over fifty – he had already gained and spent four large fortunes ...

"Look here Blair," he said, "I have made £140,000 in fees on these streets, and there is not one of these blessed banks that would today honour my cheque for £40 ..."

'In brief, he was a perfect specimen of the *bon vivant* and *raconteur* of an age now passed away. Those were the days of fox-hunting, of "three-bottle men," and "drinking fair," by which last phrase was meant tossing off your bumper, with no heeltaps, whenever or by whomsoever challenged.'

Marcus's cousin 'spicy Andrew' had belonged to this milieu. So did Andrew's fellow Freemason, installed as Provincial Grand Master of Victoria in 1861, Captain Standish, the Chief Commissioner of Police. So did Standish's friend Curtis Candler, the Melbourne coroner. All were members of the Melbourne Club except for Ireland, who was a member of the Union Club, as were Aspinall and Standish too. In *Pounds and Pedigrees* Paul de Serville describes their world, 'the world of the *flâneur*, the gourmet, card-player, pillar of the turf, and anecdotalist. They created, in the Melbourne Club, on the lawn at Flemington, picnicking in the Survey Paddock, or watching the opera from the club box, a small refuge from the exigencies of the Antipodes and from the angularities of other colonists, and a place (pale *simulacrum* of the bow-window of White's) where they and their friends could spend their free moments in the congenial company of "our lot"'.

Ronald McNicoll records in *Number 36 Collins Street: Melbourne Club 1838–1988*: 'Standish and Candler, both living in the club house, were constant users of the library, and it was Standish

who persuaded the committee to spend £150, a large sum, on books in August 1865. Mr Mullen submitted a list, and £200 worth were ordered from England. It was Candler who advocated a collection of Australian works for the library, “no matter how inaccurate, or absurd, they may be” (he was possibly thinking of Bonwick) and thus laid the foundation of the club’s fine collection of Australiana. Brough Smyth and Marcus Clarke were probably the first members to present their own literary works to the club.’

November 1870 Standish noted in his diary dining with Marcus Clarke, F. W. Haddon, Curtis Candler and H. M. Hyndman. T. A. Browne, who was to achieve fame as the novelist Rolf Boldrewood, had been a member since 1854. But there is no record of his ever meeting Clarke.



When Gordon moved to Ballarat to run the livery stables he was clearly on the local A list. He wrote sardonically to John Riddoch, 3 March 1868, about the Duke of Edinburgh: ‘The Prince’s visit was a quiet one. I suppose the extra loyal excitement was nearly used up at his last visit and has not had time to recruit. I believe the Mayor’s ball was a very good one. I did not go though I had tickets sent to Mrs Gordon and myself, which was rather a compliment, as I do not know the Mayor from Adam and had not asked anyone to get me an invitation. I was afraid Mrs Gordon would have wanted to go badly, in which case I would have had to have gone much against my will but she did not. We had an awful dust storm and wind this morning and the weather is rough still. There is a cricket match between *Galatea* officers and aboriginals and the savages have a long way the best of it.’

Maggie kept the invitation to the Royal Ball. It is preserved amongst the papers of her son, W. Park Low.

Gordon’s reference to savages is less racism than amusement that the gold-braided *crème de la crème* of the British ruling class, the officers on the ship bringing the Duke to Australia, were defeated by a supposedly primitive people at the game of cricket the British had introduced to the empire.

Gordon was secretary of the Hunt Club at Ballarat. Maggie told *The Advertiser*: ‘Gordon kept the hounds at Ballarat for a year. “I followed wherever he went,” she said proudly, “and I never had a fall, although he had a good many, because of his defect of vision. Once while we were hunting at Ballarat his horse slipped on the crumbling bank of a creek, and both horse and rider fell into the stream. Mr Gordon was nearly drowned. I got over all right and wondered where he had gone to. He could not see, and had to trust to his horse to take off at the proper distance. He had many bad falls, both in the hunting field and while racing, but he had many good wins also. He was always ready to do what he could to help others, and it was he who rode from the wreck of the *Admella* to the nearest township, just as he describes in his poem ‘The Ride from the Wreck’.”’

In *The Real Adam Lindsay Gordon* W. Park Low records how Gordon built a kennel for the hounds in their back yard with a bunk for each one, and Maggie washed them in hot soapsuds the day before the hunt and turned them into a loose box with clean straw to dry them. She fed them

on boiled meat and porridge. They were exercised in the garden, an extensive, fenced, old orchard where they kept a dingo and a kangaroo, which the hounds chased. The dingo usually escaped into his house, but when the kangaroo was caught the hounds were whipped off and it would recover in the garden.

William Brazenor, a fellow member of the Ballarat Hunt Club, recalled Gordon in *The Argus*, 11 October 1913 as ‘a melancholy, hard riding man, silent, except in the company of stable-lads, with whom he apparently talked about horses. Not a word about poetry ever fell from his lips though it was suspected that he harboured the muse by two or three who rode with him in the hunt club.

‘He was a man, said Mr Brazenor, I never could make out. He was in no way a sociable man; far from it. He and Harry Mount were partners, and had their livery stables at Craig’s Hotel. He was living round on the lake, close to the show grounds. Some of the old trees that were about his cottage are there still. Harry Mount was master of hounds. We had a subscription pack of harriers in those days – I think it must have been about 66 or 67. Gordon was married then, and his wife, I remember was a very young woman, and a very good rider.

‘Gordon was a reckless rider. We always used to say that he rode to break his neck. I remember on one occasion he rode for a jump at a corner of a fence and had to pass between the rails and a big tree just at the take off. The mare he was riding, a black one, landed him in the road, and he broke some of his fingers. But that did not stop him riding. He was taking out the drag for the hunt within the month. With his broken fingers he could not hold his mount, which bolted with him.

‘Gordon always gave me the idea that he had got out of his place in the world, and was mixing with people who were not of his class. He had the look of a man who had lost himself. He was tall, with very long legs, and used to sit with his head right over his horse’s neck. And when he jumped he had a most peculiar habit of throwing himself back till his head almost touched his horse’s flank. And that reminds me. I went out with him one day on a very clever horse I had called Skylark. I talked to him on the way, but didn’t get much out of him in reply. He was always like that – would ride silently alongside you for miles. Gordon had called on me, and asked me to go out that morning and, at his suggestion, we struck out over a new line of country for the hunt. After a while he asked me to change horses. I said that I would. My horse was a very light-mouthed horse. We changed saddles. My horse was very sensitive, and I always sat in the stirrups, never moving when he was taking a fence. Well, we rode at a fence, and Gordon moved, as was his habit. The horse baulked, and shot sideways, and Gordon came over the fence by himself. I rode up and asked him whether he was hurt.

‘He said, “No. I’d rather a horse fell through a fence than do a thing like that.”

‘I was a bit angry. “Damn it!” I said “he’s a sensitive horse and won’t stand moving just as you are coming up.”

‘Without a word Gordon went back, unsaddled my horse, and I did the same with his. He got his saddle on quickly, and I took my time. Suddenly he was up and off. He came back at the

fence, sitting perfectly upright, like a soldier, and, taking it, turned round at a gallop, and was out of my sight at once. I never saw him again that day.

‘Yes; he was a fine rider; would ride anything, and force it at a fence. But he always seemed lost, poor, unfortunate fellow. There are only three of that hunt club now, Mr Stephen Holgate, Mr William Leonard and myself. I had the pack afterwards, and sold it to Mr Chirnside, at Werribee. There were no foxes or hares in those days and I remember “blooding ‘em” with those kangaroo rats until we got rabbits up from Geelong.’

Humphris and Sladen record an anecdote by ‘Aniseed’ about Gordon with the Ballarat hounds:

“‘I only hope we shall have that rasper today,” quoth Tompkins.

‘(Tompkins nine months ago was on a horse’s back for the first time and spends his time in explaining the line the game meant to take and extolling his hunter, a wicked-looking mare with one villainous eye for ever on Tommy’s boots.)

““Yes, I hope we shall have it – I’ve got the foot of you all and I mean to have it *first*.”

““Let the hounds have it first, Tommy,” says I.

““Don’t stop him,” remarked a saturnine man (Gordon) who was standing near us; “he’ll be killed to a certainty, and if he’s in front of the hounds, perhaps they’ll eat him; they want blooding badly. Harden your heart, sonny, and say –

““And none like me, being mean like me,

““Shall die like me, while the world remains.

““I will rise with her leading the field -

““While she will fall on me,

““Crushing me, bones and brains.”“

According to Frank Madden in Humphris and Sladen, Tomkins’ real name was Jones: ‘Jones was a very excitable Welshman, as good a fellow as ever breathed, but loved talking. He had a new mare on which he ventured to say he would do wonders in the expected hunt.’ Madden adds that after Gordon’s comments ‘Jones felt sick and went home’. This may have been the same unfortunate Jones to whom Gordon refers in a letter to George Riddoch the following year, 21 July 1869: ‘I lunched with your friend Forbes yesterday, who asked after you – I met him at the Hunt on Tuesday, and we returned to town in company, escorting one of the wounded, young Jones, who got a good fall and a black eye.’



As well as being secretary of the Hunt Club, Gordon in January 1868 joined the Ballarat Troop of Light Horse which had been re-formed the previous November. Volunteer corps had been established in 1854. Clarke’s *History* records for that year: ‘The war between Russia and Turkey, in which England and France took part, created some apprehension and stopped steam communication. Volunteer corps were suggested, and a Patriotic Fund started.’

Back in London in the 1860s, Andrew Clarke looked after the volunteers’ interests when he refused to sanction a British proposal to send them a consignment of obsolete second-hand arms. Ronald Campbell records that the printer A. H. Massina ‘was one of the first batch of Victorian

volunteers sworn in. His detachment was the Richmond Rifles.’ Ann Galbally records that Judge Redmond Barry joined the Fitzroy Rifle Corps and in 1860 was voted Captain. Lurline Stuart records that the journalist James Smith joined the Collingwood rifles in 1865. And Louise Dow records that the former *Argus* editor and politician George Higinbotham was a private in the Brighton Yeomanry. Enlisting in the volunteers gave Gordon access to something of that military world to which he had once seemed destined. Clarke, however, apparently abandoned any such aspirations. There is no record that Clarke or Kendall ever enlisted.

There were now some thirty rifle companies and cavalry troops designed to help defend Victoria against invasion. Gordon was a friend of the commanding officer at Ballarat, Captain E. C. Moore, and the twenty-five volunteers were drilled in the tan-covered yard at Gordon’s stables. Sutherland writes in Turner and Sutherland: ‘The troop used to parade on a bit of park-land surrounded by a tall picket-fence. Gordon, often detained by his business past the time for falling in, would charge up the streets in full uniform on his mare Maud, take the fence at a flying leap, and fall in sedately, to the immense amusement of his fellow-members and the crowd.’ There is a photo of the volunteers, with Gordon and Harry Mount, in the Adam Lindsay Gordon Craft Cottage in Ballarat. Sutherland adds a recollection from a fellow member of the corps, W. Davidson: ‘The poet was once a candidate for the position of sergeant, a rank to which the members of the corps had the right of electing one of their number. There were three aspirants in all; but one of them had long reckoned it a certainty that he would be elected, and not only canvassed the troop industriously, but informed his people in England that he was practically appointed; whereupon there arrived from a wealthy uncle, a handsome dress sword, consigned to the nephew, whom he addressed as Lieutenant. This and other trifles exasperated the corps, and feeling was inclined to run high. Gordon made the grave proposition that as it was a fighting position and the better man ought to be appointed, he and the other candidate should be shut into a loose box and kept there till they had thrashed the question out between them, the winner to have the promotion. The step went to neither, for the third candidate was quite as eligible, and for the sake of peace the corps elected him.’

Nonetheless, on 9 March Gordon was promoted to Senior Sergeant.

It is not surprising that Gordon showed military inclinations. Destined for the army, he had for a while been a student at the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich, where he was a contemporary of ‘Chinese’ Gordon who later achieved fame at Khartoum. His school exercise book, with notes on chemistry and Arabic, is preserved in the National Library of Australia. His father tried, but failed, to get him a commission in the Indian army. It was a family with strong military traditions. Humphris and Sladen cite a petition to the war office that Gordon’s father wrote in 1831: ‘My father, grandfather, brothers, six uncles and all their sons, twenty of us, have all been brought up for the Army, and half of these have been killed or died in foreign countries or on foreign service.’

As for boxing, that was something Gordon had learned over in England from the middle-weight champion Jem Edwards, the Earywig, who, Humphris and Sladen record, conducted a boxing school at the Roebuck in Cheltenham High Street. Gordon’s long reach made him very

effective, despite his short sight. The W. Park Low papers record: 'Gordon delighted in putting the gloves on with anyone for a friendly spar. Mrs Gordon said they would shut themselves up in a loose box so that she would not see them as she did not care for it. When Mr Trainor visited them, he and Gordon would often have a spar in the loose box.'

Harry Stockdale recalled in *The Argus*, 17 May 1919: 'Gordon stood for pluck. At Kingston races in the south-east of South Australia I saw him take all the boast and brag out of a big and impudent bully giving him some four stone in the handicap, and no end of a thrashing. He had extraordinary reach of arm and was a very hard hitter.' Owen Meylett recorded in *The Australasian*, 14 July 1906: 'At Mount Gambier races on one occasion Mr Tolmer saw Gordon knock out Black Johnson, a professional pug, in a round and a half. It was on the course, just before the race. Gordon had his colours on, and was about to mount Cadger. Black Johnson said something of an insulting nature as Gordon had his foot in the stirrup. He stopped, handed the horse to the trainer or a friend, and rushed after the pug, peering for him right and left in the crowd with his shortsighted eyes. He found him, thrashed him, got on his horse, and won the race.'



January 1868 Kendall had written a poem for Charlotte; the note accompanying it reads: 'For my darling Lottie to whom a passionate love and its ceaseless longings are given. My bright pet cannot question the power of that affection. Let it be her cloak to shelter her for ever and ever.'

7 March 1868, Charlotte Rutter and Henry Clarence Kendall were married at St John's Bishopthorpe in Glebe, Sydney, six months after they first met. As with Shakespeare's marriage, a special faculty was issued the day before that allowed the reading of the bans to be dispensed with. Henry was 29, Charlotte 19. A. G. Stephens remarked in 'The Truth about Henry Kendall', in *The Windsor and Richmond Gazette*, 27 January 1928: 'Since Kendall was baptized Thomas Henry Kendall, the name of Henry Clarence Kendall, which he gave upon his marriage to Charlotte Rutter in Sydney, 1868, must be considered as only a misleading flourish of personality.' Henry may have added the name Clarence in homage to the Clarence river beside which he had lived for at Grafton. The three books of poems published in his lifetime were all presented as simply by Henry Kendall.

A week later a sensational event occurred during the Duke of Edinburgh's visit to Sydney. Clarke's *History* records: 'On the 13th March, a madman, named O'Farrell, shot at the Duke and wounded him. Happily His Royal Highness recovered, and the occasion but served to raise the loyalty of the colonists to a pitch of unbounded enthusiasm.'

Henry James O'Farrell, a former Ballarat resident, was of Irish descent. Parkes, the New South Wales Colonial Secretary and Minister of Police, played the terrorist card and promoted the idea that the assassination was part of a Fenian conspiracy. The evidence suggests that this was not so, a conclusion shared in Clarke's calling O'Farrell 'a madman.' Parkes' claims were later discredited, contributing to the collapse of the New South Wales government the following year. Aspinall came up from Melbourne as defence barrister, but O'Farrell pleaded guilty and was

sentenced to death, despite Prince Alfred's asking for clemency. He was hanged on 21 April. Kendall contributed two poems to a volume loyally deploring the attempted assassination, *Prince Alfred's Wreath*.



In 1868 Clarke inherited a 'sum of money which was to have proved my knowledge of the sheep-farming business'. Perhaps it was this that provided the subscription to the Melbourne Club, and the illusion that he could live the high life. He soon found a way to dispose of it, as he recalled in 'Alfred Telo – A Reminiscence', in *The Leader*, 11 October 1879: 'Ass that I was, to be sure, I started a magazine with it, and Telo helped me. For this magazine he translated Russian tales, and I wrote a novel – my first novel! We gave little suppers, and became familiar with some very gay company. No more cold mutton, no more beer, no more pewter pots and Barrett's twist tobacco. The refreshing bivalve, the clear soup, the cod of the Murray, the cutlets loved by the wise *du Maintenon*, the omelette of France, the rarebit of Wales all graced our hospitable board. Kid gloves were our daily wear, champagne our only drink. Had the magazine been Rothschild's it would have broken. I forget how long it lasted, long enough to see my novel finished – the work, by the way, was properly damned by a genial critic spending twelve months in Australia in order to "know all about the infernal colonies" – and then I sold it. It was about the only thing I had to sell.'

The magazine was the *Colonial Monthly*. It had been founded by the printer W. H. Williams in September 1865 as the *Australian Monthly Magazine*. Clarke's first published story appeared in it in March 1866. Entitled 'The Mantuan Apothecary. A Picture in Two Panels,' the story develops the alchemical motifs from Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. Clarke had been fascinated with alchemy from his schooldays; so had Gerard Manley Hopkins, who had produced a drawing called 'The Alchemist in the City', possibly to illustrate Clarke's story. Alchemy was to be the structural theme of Clarke's serial *His Natural Life*.

A couple of issues later, May 1866, Clarke contributed his memoir of his early days in Melbourne, 'Austin Friars,' this time under a version of the name Gerard had coined for him, Mark Scrivener. A two-part story, 'The Doppelganger', the first part unsigned, the second signed Marcus Clarke, appeared in July and August, followed in November by a story 'On a Pair of Boots' signed Mark Scrivener. July 1867 he contributed a story, 'A Very Tough Subject', under the name Mark Scrivener again.

The *Monthly* gradually established itself as a significant publication in the development of literature in Australia. Apart from Clarke, contributors included Henry Gyles Turner, George Gordon McCrae, George Walstab, James Smith and J. E. Neild. A series on the Bibliography of Australia by Gordon's old friend Julian Tenison Woods was taken over from the *Australian Monthly Review* which, edited by Walstab, had existed for a mere two issues in March and April 1866. Illustrations were provided by Thomas Carrington. In 'Melbourne *Punch* and its early artists' in the *La Trobe Library Journal* (October 1969) Marguerite Mahood surveys Carrington's career. Born in London in 1843 and educated at City of London school, he received his first

lesson in drawing from George Cruikshank. After an unsuccessful time on the goldfields, by the end of 1866 he had become Melbourne *Punch*'s regular cartoonist and illustrator.

In 1867 Williams sold the *Australian Monthly Magazine* to the printers and publishers Clarson, Massina & Company, who changed its name to the *Colonial Monthly*, to distinguish it from their *Australian Journal* which had also begun publication in September 1865, under the editorship of George Walstab. Clarke may possibly have begun to have had some editorial role from this time. The magazine's range of contributors expanded. The first issue as the *Colonial Monthly* in September 1867 had amongst other contributions Henry Gyles Turner's review of George Gordon McCrae's *Mamba*, James Smith's 'Recollections of Travel', and the first a three-part article on 'King Lear's madness' by Richard Horne. October included Smith on *Don Quixote*, a story by George Walstab, a poem by McCrae, and Horne again on *King Lear*.

Kendall wrote from Sydney to Charles Harpur, 3 October 1867: 'I have not written a line for the journal yet: indeed I am obliged to supplement my means by sticking to political prose – a thing scarcely suitable for the *Monthly*.'

The following month Kendall's first contributions appeared, along with a story by Clarke and a review of Gordon. *The Argus* commented, 1 November 1867: 'The *Colonial Monthly* Magazine for November is more evenly sustained in point of merit than either of its predecessors. In none of the papers is there any evidence of remarkable immaturity. The most readable of all of these is a short story of London "fast" life, by Mr Marcus Clarke, entitled, "Playing with Fire." It is true Mr Clarke has been indebted for the motif of his story to Thackeray's *Pendennis* and Reade and Taylor's *Masks and Faces*, and that there is nothing strikingly original in his little tale; but it is smartly and pleasantly written, and the interest is so well sustained that its somewhat abrupt ending is quite disappointing. Mr Henry Kendall's verses on "Mountain Moss" are pretty and musical, as Mr Kendall's verses always are ... H.K. contributes some sensible pages under the head of "Talkers," and Mr McCrae has some octosyllabics on "Love's Last Request." The only article which falls below the proper standard of the magazine is Evelyn's contribution entitled "The Book World," a miscellaneous hotchpotch of flippant and superficial nonsense about works which the writer has evidently never read. *The Colonial Monthly* is well worth its shilling this month, and its progressive improvement is a good sign.'

Within three months, however, *The Argus* reported, 5 February 1868: 'It is rumoured that the *Colonial Monthly* magazine is in a moribund condition, and that the number just issued is to be the last. There is not, however, any intimation to that effect in its pages, so possibly its apprehended dissolution has been averted. Perhaps the most curious paper in this number is the one by Mr Marcus Clarke, entitled "Cannabis Indica," which consists of a wild story, dictated, Mr Clarke assures us, while he was under the influence of that remarkable narcotic. It is interesting as a record of some of the psychological phenomena produced by the much-prized "hashish" of the Asiatics.'

The *Colonial Monthly* did not cease publication, but after running it for six months Clarson, Massina & Co. decided to sell it. Clarke wrote in his Peripatetic Philosopher column in *The Australasian*, 22 February 1868: 'It is reported that ... the *Colonial Monthly* has changed hands,

and will be brought out next month in an enlarged form and under new editorship ... I wish the spirited individual who has taken the thing in hand all the success he deserves.'

Beware of what you wish for, especially when wishes are so wittily, disingenuously and ambiguously phrased. But Clarke was not one to resist an opportunity for wit.

With the first number of volume two, March 1868, Clarke is named as 'proprietor and editor'. He was twenty-two. He slipped his poem 'The Lady of Lynn' into his first issue. Gerard Manley Hopkins had admired it six years earlier, writing to Ernest Hartley Coleridge, 3 September 1862: 'I must tell you that Clarke writes very good poetry. He and I compare notes and ideas. I think I showed you his "Lady of Lynn."' Cyril Hopkins records that Clarke had sent home to England the verses of this poem 'for which he requested my brother, Gerard, to do an illustration ... This was accordingly supplied and some slight alterations ... were suggested at the time. These were adopted and two more verses added. Soon after his arrival in Melbourne, Marcus posted me a copy of the poem with a view to its insertion in *Once a Week*, a periodical then at the zenith of its popularity.' The manuscript, two pages signed M.C., is preserved at Campion Hall, Oxford. *Once a Week* rejected it. But what did that matter now? Clarke had his own magazine.



In his affidavit of January 1875, when he went into voluntary insolvency, Clarke declared: 'In the year 1868 I in conjunction with some others started in Melbourne a magazine called the *Colonial Monthly*, and spent more than one thousand pounds in endeavouring to establish it; and in consequence of my partners not paying their share the whole of the expense fell upon me and I had to borrow at heavy interest to meet it. And I received no remuneration from the said publication.'

Clarke does not name these 'some others', these 'partners'. It is not clear who or how many they were. Clarkson, Massina stated in *Australian Journal*, September 1872, that when they relinquished the *Colonial Monthly*, they 'transferred it to a well-known popular writer', mentioning no other partners. In *The First Ninety Years: The Printing House of Massina, Melbourne, 1859 to 1949* Ronald Campbell writes that Clarke acquired the *Colonial Monthly* 'either in conjunction with G. A. Walstab and others, or as a sole proprietor. In any case he was editor,' and Walstab 'for a time ... was also part-owner, with Shillinglaw ... and, it is to be feared, lost a good deal of money over it'. Mackinnon writes that Clarke 'with the pecuniary assistance of a generous friend and admirer, the late Mr Drummond, police magistrate ... purchased from Mr Williams the *Australian Magazine*.' Though this seems to be incorrect, Williams having sold the magazine to Clarkson, Massina & Co., who then sold it Clarke under its new name.

Henry G. Turner wrote of Clarke in the *Melbourne Review*: 'During 1868, in conjunction with Mr Walstab, he started the *Colonial Monthly*, an ambitious magazine devoted to original fiction, essays, poetry and general literature. It had a troubled life of about two years, and resulted in considerable financial loss.' Turner had written for the original *Australian Monthly Magazine* from its first issue in September 1865 and continued as a contributor when it was re-named the

Colonial Monthly in September 1867. Brian Elliott in his biography *Marcus Clarke* suggests that he may be the Tommy Turnover mentioned in Clarke's first issue of his *Colonial Monthly* as one of the 'proprietors, contributors and friends' at the editorial table with the editor and the artist. Arthur Patchett Martin writes in *Temple Bar* that 'Marcus Clarke and two literary friends founded the *Colonial Monthly*' but names neither of them. Elliott suggests one may have been Alfred Telo. Cyril Hopkins writes that Clarke 'purchased, with the assistance of a friend, the periodical' and, 'having changed its name ... he became joint editor with the late J. J. Shillinglaw of the said periodical,' leaving it unclear whether the friend was Shillinglaw or someone else. Both Turner and Martin as well as Clarke himself write that Clarke 'started' or 'founded' the *Colonial Monthly*; Cyril Hopkins says he 'changed its name'. Possibly he had some involvement in the journal from the time of its purchase from Williams and change of name in September 1867, before he was named 'proprietor and editor' in March 1868.

Of those named in association with the *Colonial Monthly*, it is not clear to what extent their involvement was financial or editorial or both. William Murray Drummond, born in Barra c.1828, a former army officer, was a police magistrate and goldfields warden and member of the Melbourne Club. His dramatic death two months later may have meant that his financial support was never delivered, or curtailed.

George Arthur Walstab's father had been a planter in the West Indies, like Clarke's and Gordon's grandfathers and George Gordon McCrae's great-grandfather. Walstab was born in Tottenham in 1834 and educated at Merchant Taylors' school where he was dux. He participated in the French coup d'état of 1851, migrated to Victoria in 1852, served in the Mounted Police for two years, and then went to India and participated in the suppression of the Indian Mutiny. George Gordon McCrae in an obituary of him records: 'He was shot through one of his legs just above the ankle-joint by a matchlock ball ... He married the daughter of an Indian colonel, and might have settled in Calcutta but his wounded ankle proving more troublesome, he resigned.' He suffered from the injury for the rest of his life. Annie Baxter Dawbin remarked in her diary, 25 August 1863, after meeting him back on leave: 'He is *extremely* good-looking I think, although very yellow from the effects of the Indian climate.' A sub-editor and editor of the *Calcutta Englishman*, 1860–64, he was appointed the first editor of the monthly *Australian Journal* in September 1865, and in 1866 was editor of *The Australasian Monthly Review* which failed after two issues. He went bankrupt in 1870. If he was one of Clarke's partners he may well have been unable to pay his share. He was certainly closely involved with Clarke in the *Colonial Monthly*, and kept it going when Clarke had his serious riding accident later in the year.

George Gordon McCrae asked in his obituary: 'Was George Walstab first of all a journalist? To one who knew him well in his "hot youth," it appears otherwise. Passing from one career to another he *became* a journalist, and, once having become so, gave up his whole life and energies to journalism. But George Walstab was in his heart first, and before all, a soldier. His disposition, most probably inherited, was distinctly martial; his youthful aspirations entirely military, his favourite reading, chronicles of chivalry and military romances.'

In 'A Colonial Literary Club, by a Wandering Bohemian' in the *Town and Country Journal*, 18 February 1871, Henry Kendall wrote an affectionate description of Walstab as a man 'with the true coin about him ... that brilliant, wayward, unlucky wight, G.A.W.

'Few literary men have emigrated to these colonies with equally bright prospects, and scarcely any have so signally failed.

"Poor G.A.W." said Jones one day to me, "he has the pen of a Thackeray with a double portion of the indolence of Coleridge."

'The remark, especially the last of it, constituted, in my opinion, an extremely well balanced estimate of our subject. I believed it, not because I accredited G.A.W. with the accomplishment of anything great and continuous, but on account of the many wasted exhibitions of his fine powers which had come under my notice, scattered in unsatisfactory fragments through perished and perishable newspapers. The man was always projecting some work worthy of his genius, but invariably turning back when on the threshold of performance. A good looking Bohemian he was, and a pleasant wit, but, as Jones remarked, indolent, – dreadfully indolent. In the end he sold himself to newspaper proprietors, and thereafter, in all human probability, the one novelist of the Australian colonies dwindled down to the proportions of a mere literary hack.'

Kendall's characterization of Walstab as 'the one novelist' was published in the *Town and Country Journal*, 18 February 1871, before the serial of Clarke's *His Natural Life* had been completed and published in book form. In 'Notes Upon Men and Books – 8' in *The Freeman's Journal*, 2 March 1872, Kendall placed Clarke's achievement as a novelist ahead of Walstab's.

The *Colonial Monthly* office in lower Elizabeth Street, nearly opposite the Duke of Rothesay Hotel, became a focus for Clarke and his fellow contributors, both in and out of business hours. George Gordon McCrae decorated the office, as he recalled in his obituary of Walstab: 'The walls of the editor's den were frescoed, or rather pencilled with topical and character sketches, battle-pieces, etc., but chief among these, and over the fireplace G.A.W. on a fiery charger just thrown back upon his haunches, above the legend, "Yes, it is true, gentlemen, that I was once a policeman ... but then ... ye gods! What a policeman!!!"'

In "The Golden Age of Australian Literature" McCrae adds: 'our Treasurer had a figure of himself on the outer side of his door representing a man in a sitting posture with a great gallon measure at his lips, with the legend subscribed "J. J. S. in Liquidation."' There was a messenger, 'a small boy whom John Shillinglaw, had named Shrimp: most of us thought that the cognomen had been even more descriptive if shorn of its first three letters, for useful as he was made to be in various directions he was imp all over: a sort of compromise between a rouseabout and a waiter. His chiefest function when not running errands was in making a progress across the street at least once a day bearing a huge tin with him to the Duke of Rothesay, with whom the *Colonial Monthly* had a friendly understanding. The beer if "Colonial" was of the best, and punctually supplied and delivered at lunch hour.'

John Joseph Shillinglaw was born in London in 1831 and his family migrated to Australia in 1852. At various times he was an inspector of water police, secretary to the steam navigation board, the medical board of health, the police superannuation board and the board of viticulture.

George Gordon McCrae left a memoir of him, and recalled their first acquaintance in the early 1850s: ‘He was then airing in all its early bloom the navy-blue uniform of the Water Police – his sword swinging loose and the shoe of the scabbard clashing and ringing gaily on the stone pavement that was then ours ... All his early days having been spent on the very fringe of sea-life, he had become nautical to a degree in his phraseology as well as a most “robustious” singer of “chantheys.” We – all of us – a good deal more than liked him ... He wore navy-blue habitually, a tall hat, and carried a small dispatch box filled with mss. paper and swinging his cane as he walked whistling (or humming to himself) along the street. He was very much attached to Marcus and Moloney.’ Elliott records that in 1869 Shillinglaw was retrenched from his position as shipping master of the Port of Melbourne and became a freelance writer. This may have been when he took over the magazine from Clarke. He may have had a pecuniary interest in the publication from the outset. He turns up in a number of Clarke’s writings with his name punningly mutated to Pennylex.

George Gordon McCrae was not a financial backer of the *Colonial Monthly*, but he was a regular contributor, and a long-time friend of Clarke’s. Born in Scotland in 1833, the eldest son of nine children, he was brought to Australia in 1841. His mother Georgiana was the illegitimate daughter of the fifth Duke of Gordon. An accomplished artist, she achieved posthumous fame as a diarist when her grandson Hugh published *Georgiana’s Journal* in 1934. George’s father Andrew was a lawyer and squatter before becoming a police magistrate. Arthur’s Seat on the coast of Port Phillip Bay, where the family lived in the 1840s, is now a National Trust property. George was a poet, artist and man of letters who kept a day job as a civil servant. His first employment was as a clerk in the Melbourne shipping agency of Octavius Browne, brother of Hablot Knight Browne, who as ‘Phiz’ was Dickens’ illustrator until 1859. Appointed to the Auditor-General’s office in 1853, George ultimately became deputy registrar-general. Brenda Niall records in her biography of his mother, *Georgiana*, that his parents separated in 1867, his father returned to England for seven years and in November 1868 George and his mother moved from Hoddle Street, Collingwood, to Arundel Cottage, Sherwood Street, Richmond. One of the longest survivors of the *Colonial Monthly* fraternity, he died in 1927. Over the years he wrote a number of recollections of the milieu. His son Hugh McCrae published some of them posthumously, and drew on George’s conversation and papers for a six-part series of articles, ‘The Yorick’, in *The Bulletin* in 1929, and *My Father and My Father’s Friends* in 1935.

Hugh McCrae never met Gordon or Kendall, though, he recalled in a letter to R. G. Howarth, 10 May 1948: ‘At an earlier period, I had wet Marcus Clarke’s knee. Marcus said not a word; merely passing me on to John Shillinglaw who shared the experience, and wished very much to play the same trick on Mannington Caffyn, and *would have* ... except for the fact that a long drought had set in.’ Hugh later acted the part of Gordon in W. J. Lincoln’s 1916 silent movie *The Life’s Romance of Adam Lindsay Gordon*.

Cuthbert Fetherstonhaugh recalled: 'I remember Tom Lloyd, brother of the well-known "Squire of Yamma," telling me that, driving in to Ballarat one day, he met Gordon on a promising youngster, and hailed him, "Where are you off to?"

"Oh, just going to give the youngster a fall or two," replied Gordon.

'As Lloyd was returning, he met Gordon again, but this time in a spring cart with his head bandaged. He had given the youngster a "fall or two."'

Such falls were not uncommon. Saturday 21 March 1868 Gordon had a serious riding accident in Ballarat from which he arguably never fully recovered. W. Park Low writes in *The Real Adam Lindsay Gordon* that Gordon had jumped out onto the road, where Mount found him lying unconscious. Mount could not do anything on his own, so drove home for his groom and the two of them lifted Gordon into the buggy and took him to the hospital. It was about 10 o'clock in the morning. Maggie saw the buggy drive by, but did not know Gordon was the injured man. After dinner Mount called on her and she insisted on having Gordon brought home. An hour or so later four men carried him in on a stretcher. He had regained consciousness and told her than he was not much hurt. But he was, with five ribs and his collar bone broken, and his skull fractured.

W. Park Low says that Gordon was schooling Prince Rupert. Other accounts name a different horse. According to Hugh Anderson, Gordon was returning from Julius Mount's farm at Dowling Forest, where he had been training Viking out at the racecourse. 'He returned to Ballarat on Necromancer but, instead of taking the lane to the road, he jumped the fence into the paddock in order to go across country. At the second jump the horse baulked, Gordon urged it on, and it struck the top rail with its knees, falling onto the rider, and then treading on his face as it scrambled up. Gordon lay unconscious and was taken to Ballarat hospital. He suffered several broken ribs, a broken nose and jaw, and a wound at the back of his skull, deep enough to place two fingers side by side in it.' Hutton, citing the *Ballarat Star*, also says the horse was Necromancer.

Gordon was still convalescing when, at dawn on 14 April 1868, his daughter, Annie Lindsay Gordon, died from enteritis. Edith Humphris records that the Rev. H. W. Adeney who was the Anglican clergyman at St Peter's Church in Sturt Street recalled how Gordon called on him and asked him to bury her. 'Adeney agreed to do so and drove to the funeral in the coach with Lindsay, who was broken-hearted.'

Maggie recalled the tragedy in her interview with *The Advertiser* in 1912: 'It was while he was at Ballarat that his heaviest misfortunes occurred. He had a bad fall from a young horse which he was riding, and he was so seriously injured that he was confined to his bed for many weeks. While he was lying ill his baby daughter, who had been christened Annie Lindsay Gordon, and was then ten months old, died. He was passionately fond of her, and this had a great effect upon his spirits. She lies buried in a cemetery near Lake Wendouree, and there is a marble slab over her grave, but there is nothing in the inscription to tell that she was his daughter. About this time, too, the stables were burnt down, and several valuable horses and a number of vehicles were lost in the flames. The death of his child was a great blow, for he had a very affectionate nature. He was always too good to others, and he never thought enough of himself. Yes, if he had a fault, it was

that he was too good, too open-handed, and too generous. The sorrow which visited us at Ballarat caused Mr Gordon to leave that city.'

There was no reason to stay in Ballarat, anyway. As Gordon wrote to John Riddoch six months later, October 1868, there was not a bare living to be made from the stables after meeting the rent of £8, even though he made a little extra money by horse dealing.

If the fall the previous month was something from which Gordon never recovered physically, the death of Annie was something from which he never recovered emotionally. It was something from which his marriage inevitably suffered too, as he and his wife were plunged into their grief. Gordon designed a headstone for the grave, preserved in the Park Low papers: 'Annie Lindsay Gordon Died 14th April 1868 Aged 10 months. Suffer Little children to come unto me ...' In due course it was placed at the grave. 3 October 1919 Annie was disinterred and re-buried in her father's grave at Brighton Cemetery. Maggie was present at the occasion. The service was again performed by the Rev. Adeney.



Four days after his daughter Annie's death, *The Australasian* published the first part of a two-part article by Gordon. Normally it might have brought him delight to appear in print, and to be earning some money by his pen rather than losing it at the unprofitable stables. In the circumstances, it is unlikely he felt much at all. The article appeared as 'Racing Ethics by the Turf-Cutter' on the 18 and 25 April:

'A good bookmaker may be a better man than a bad clergyman, and we have good bookmakers amongst us. If all the layers of odds were of the same stamp as the host of the Hunt Club Hotel and a few others, we should have scant cause for complaint as far as they are concerned.

'But there are men who wager openly, and do their business without let or hindrance, and whose disreputable practices bring discredit upon all who profession may be in any respect identical or even similar. These are the carrion birds of the turf, who hove to and fro on the confines of the ring, seeking for the corpses upon which they may gorge themselves to repletion. Nor is the power which they sometimes wield contemptible, whatever their persons may be. Their ill-gotten gains, secured by their unhallowed calculations, and strengthened by their unholy alliances, give them an amount of evil influence, which, if fairly gauged, would astound the uninitiated. Like the Choosers of the Slain in Norse traditions, they are not unfrequently able to select for themselves, in which case they doom the quarry that appears fattest in their eyes. Almost every tyro in racing lore knows that a horse not meant for a race is, as far as his chance of winning that event goes, virtually dead, for though winning is always more or less doubtful, there are fifty ways in which a horse can be made safe, *i.e.*, certain to lose, from scratching at the post to carrying false weight; therefore sentence of death is hardly ever carried out literally, as the "dead un" (to use the eloquent phraseology of the Welshers) that comes to life may be useful to fill the same post, and enact the same part again. And yet the mysterious fate of Exile would favour the supposition that there are men on the turf that will stop at absolutely nothing. True, we

have no positive proof that the horse was poisoned, or even tampered with, but a more suspicious case has seldom occurred.’

Gordon goes on to take issues with some of the dangers of Australian racing: ‘There is one branch of our national sports which ought to be the connecting link between the race-course and the hunting-field, and here, at least some alterations may surely be effected. In England, steeplechase handicaps are often much too light but there the courses are light also, and the weeds are able to carry their feathers at racing place through the thin straggling hedges and low rotten fences with a comparatively small percentage of serious accidents. In England, too, steeplechasing is confined to the winter or early spring, and the soft ground is favourable to the legs of the horses and the bones of their riders; here we have the evils of the home system without the advantages. Our handicaps are adjusted on such a scale that many of our steeplechasers have to carry light stable boys, who are not strong enough to steady them, over ground nearly as hard as a macadamized road, and a succession of fences every one of which seems to have been constructed for the express purpose of throwing the horse that fails to clear it. Steeplechasing is of course intended to be a dangerous pastime, but the sport is scarcely enhanced by making it as dangerous as it can be made.’

Gordon’s riding accident of a month earlier had not been in a steeplechase, though it had been the result of a fall at a fence. It is unclear whether he had written the article before the fall, or afterwards while convalescing, reflecting on the incident. He stresses, anyway, the unnecessary dangers that Australian practices created: ‘I confess I do not care to see an impetuous hard-mouthed brute overpowering a weak lad and rushing at stiff timber like a bull at a gate. This much at least will scarcely be gainsaid, our horses (to say nothing of their riders) seldom last long at cross-country work. The continual hard raps on heavy red gum or stringy bark rails, coupled with the constant jarring shocks caused by landing on a soil baked by an Australian sun, is enough to cripple the strongest knees and wear out the toughest sinews in a very few seasons.’

After making various suggestions for improvements, he concluded: ‘Under the present system it is no wonder that our jumping horses are either crippled or cowed prematurely, for we usually find that if their legs last long enough their tempers are ruined, and they take to baulking with even the best men on their backs, which, considering the way in which they have been handled and schooled from the first, ought not to surprise us.’



In Sydney Kendall received the news that his former mentor, employer and fellow poet, James Lionel Michael, had drowned in the Clarence River on 28 April 1868. He was 44 years old. 5 May the *Clarence and Richmond Examiner* reported on the inquest and 11 May the *Sydney Morning Herald* ran an abridged version: ‘Robert Purdie, M.D., deposed: He was a duly qualified medical practitioner residing at Grafton; he had examined the body of the deceased; the general appearance of the body indicated that death had been caused by drowning; the right eye was severely injured – the wound being jagged and such as might be produced from falling on a broken bottle, or inflicted by a blow from a switch; the frontal bone of the orbit was broken in by

the force of the blow; the injuries were such as would be more likely to be produced from falling on something than a blow; the injury to the right eye had evidently been inflicted only a very short time previous to death.'

There was speculation as to whether the death was accident, murder or suicide. The inquest found: 'There was no evidence before the jury to show how the deceased came into the water, nor whether the cause of death was accidental or otherwise.' Ackland's biography records that Moore argued that a man wearing galoshes, overcoat, and a cap with earmuffs seemed more concerned with survival than suicide. But in 'About Some Men of Letters in Australia' Kendall had no doubts: 'His body was found floating in the river; and the fact that he had destroyed himself was proved by a letter which he had left in his office, and by the character of some verses that were found on his person. The stanzas were syllables of despair, but their beauty was such that it made the heart ache. I am stating a sincere impression when I state that I do not know where I have seen a more touching farewell to men and time, than poor Michael's forgotten lyric.'

Kendall wrote a tribute which J. Sheridan Moore included in his *Life and Genius of James Lionel Michael* that same year.



And now in Melbourne there occurred the bizarre event, which led to the death of Clarke's friend William Murray Drummond. *The Argus*, Monday 4 May 1868, ran the story: 'FATAL EXPERIMENT WITH A TIGER SNAKE.

'Mr William Drummond, a police magistrate of high standing in Victoria, and for many years connected with the higher departments of our public service, was on last Friday attracted by the performances of Joseph Shires, a well known personage, who makes his living by selling a snake-poison antidote, which was a secret preparation of his own, and by public exhibitions, in which he allowed venomous snakes to bite him, he keeping himself safe by the use of his own specific. He was last week exhibiting at the Canterbury dancing-hall, in Bourke Street. Mr Drummond – who was a man of great strength of mind, and has frequently shown himself one who scarcely knew what danger was – openly expressed his entire disbelief in the reality of Shires' pretensions. He doubted that Shires' snakes were venomous, and carried his incredulity so far as to resolve that he would apply a crucial test in his own person – i.e., let a snake bite him, and then apply the antidote and send the snake itself to Professor Halford. Parenthetically it may be mentioned that Dr Halford, the medical professor at the Melbourne University, has lately devoted himself to a close inquiry into the character of snake poison and its effects upon the system. As our readers already know, Mr Drummond was allowed to make his experiment, and has paid the penalty with his life. Words cannot express how great a shock the fatal news has inflicted on those who knew the deceased gentleman. Moving in a circle of warm friends, and endeared to them by his great amiability no less than his possession of considerable intellectual attainments, the fatal result of his rash experiment is felt as a terrible blow. The few who had any notion of his intention were eager to prevent him, but his apparent ease of manner and carelessness disarmed their suspicions

till too late. At first it was hoped that the antidote had saved him, but the sad result has added another to the long list of proofs of the deadliness of some of the Australian snakes.

‘The facts of the case are – to use the modern phrase – sensational in the highest degree. We have taken some trouble to collect them, and as they are peculiar we shall avoid the ordinary form of narration. Each witness shall tell his own tale, and we merely add explanatory remarks. It must be premised that Mr Drummond has of late years been police magistrate at Daylesford, but for reasons which belong to the history of the department, he has for several weeks resided at South Yarra, and consequently been absent from the scene of his duties. On Friday evening, between six and seven o’clock, he was dining at the Café de Paris with a party of friends. One of these describes that part of the affair, and we give his account.

‘Mr Alfred Telo says: On Friday evening, I was dining at the Café de Paris with Mr Drummond and party of others. He was sitting near me. The conversation turned upon Shires’ exhibition and snake poisoning. I forget how the discussion led up to this, but Mr Drummond expressed his disbelief in Shires, and said, “Look here, let us go down to the fellow’s place, and prove him a humbug.”

‘I said, “How are you to do it?”

‘He said, “My dear fellow, I will show you how. I will go to him and be bitten by the snake, and then you will see what a humbug he is.”

‘I said, “Don’t be a fool, Drummond.”

‘I repeated this, and said that I would not go with him to see him make such a fool of himself. He was completely unaffected by drinking, and calm and collected, laughing at his own idea and my objections. He urged me to go with him after we had adjourned to coffee, but I refused.

‘He said, “I will ask Clarke,” who was by.

‘He said, “Clarke, come with me and see the snake-poisoning.”

‘I said, “Don’t you go Drummond,” and then I left them, not for a moment believing that anything serious was to be done.

‘The story now follows in the account given by Mr Marcus Clarke, another friend of Mr Drummond:

‘Mr Marcus H. Clarke says: On Friday evening last I saw Mr Drummond in the café, at coffee, after dinner.

‘He called to me and said, “Clarke, will you come down with me and see Shires.”

‘I said, “It’s of no use going now; wait till later in the evening.”

‘He said, “No, come down now, because we shall see him alone then, and not have a lot of fellows round.”

‘I said he had better not. I did not know he was serious, but after talking further we went together to the Canterbury Casino, in Bourke Street, where Shires was. When there Drummond asked the barmaid if Shires was in.

‘She said, “No,” but in a moment added, “There he is, drinking in the bar.”

‘Shires was called, and when he came round to us, Drummond asked him if there was a private room in which he could see him and talk about his snakes.

‘Shires said “No,” but eventually took us into the large dancing room, where there was no one but ourselves.

‘We sat down, and Drummond said, “Now, Shires, I want the most venomous and deadliest snake you have to bite me in the wrist, and then apply the antidote. We will then have the snake’s head cut off and send it to Professor Halford, who will know whether the thing is all right.”

‘Shires demurred, he said he was afraid he could not do it.

‘Drummond at last said, “Are you game to try the experiment, Shires? It cannot do you any harm, and will be a good advertisement to you.”

‘Shires seemed struck with the reference to an advertisement, and, after a time said, “We cannot do it now, sir, because Wright (the casino proprietor) won’t let the snakes out till nine o’clock.”

““Very well,” said Drummond, “mind, we will come back at nine o’clock, and try it then.”

‘I took hold of his arm, and said, “Drummond, this is too ridiculous, let us come away.”

‘We then went. Shires followed us to the door, and as we were going Drummond said to him, “Now you hold your tongue about this, or you won’t got the five shillings I am going to give you.”

‘Shires said, “That is precious little money, sir.”

‘My notion of the matter till then was that the whole thing was half chaff, but as soon as I got Drummond out I said, “For heaven’s sake don’t be such an ass as this. It is madness to try and be bitten by a snake.”

‘He replied, “All right old fellow, he will never let his snake kill me.”

‘I tried hard to dissuade him from his idea as we walked up the street, but he laughed, and told me it would be all right. When we got as far as Provost and Bessieres, the barbers, I said, “If you persist in this I will put a stop to it by telling a lot of fellows about it.”

‘He laughed again and said, “Oh, but you promised to say nothing about our visit,” which I had.

‘He added, “Don’t be frightened, my, boy, I am not a fool.”

‘We went into Provost and Bessieres, and he had his hair brushed. We talked and laughed the while, and I thought the affair was over, and there was an end of his notion. We left the barber’s and went over to the Café de Paris, where Drummond sat down and talked with some friends. I went into the theatre for a while, and coming out, chanced to notice that the clock pointed to a little past nine. I looked towards Drummond, who had just then risen to leave.

‘He beckoned me, and said, “Come on, old fellow,” laughingly.

‘I said, “Mind, if you are going with the snake fellow, I will have nothing to do with you. I won’t be a party to such nonsense.”

‘He laughed once more, and went downstairs, and I wondered to myself if he were really going to do what he said. I thought, however, that he was in joke, and remembered that he had an appointment at half-past eight to take his wife home. I also thought to myself that if I wanted to interfere I could do so by means of the police, and then I was sure myself that he would not be such a fool. This was the more impressed on my mind by his laughter and jocularly. Considering

all things, how probable it was that he had gone to his appointment at half-past eight, and how I should annoy him – for he was a very sensitive man – by interfering with the police, I dismissed the subject from my mind.

‘Shires’ public performance at the Canterbury Casino being fixed to take place at eleven p.m. that night, a party of gentlemen, including the two previous witnesses and the writer of this narrative, were attracted to the place by curiosity. On entering the room, Mr Charles Wright, the proprietor of the place, came up to them and said “Your friend, Mr Drummond, has been bitten by a snake. The antidote has been applied, and it is all right. I would not let it be done here for a hundred pounds, and so they went to Garton’s hotel.”

‘The performance then took place. Shires showed a lot of snakes – some most venomous, others, innocuous. He wreathed them round him, allowed himself to be bitten twice, and applied the antidote each time. One of the snakes – a tiger snake – which bit him, was afterwards made to bite a fowl, which died almost immediately. Inquiries were then made at Garton’s hotel but Mr Drummond was gone.

‘What had really happened after Mr Clarke and Mr Drummond parted is told by another witness, one Dailey, a man frequently employed in Melbourne as ticket taker at places of entertainment. George Philip Dailey says: At about nine o’clock, on Friday evening last, I was at the Canterbury hall, when I saw Mr Drummond (I did not know him then) talking with Shires. I spoke to Shires, who told me he was waiting for Mr Wright to come in, as a gentleman wanted to try an experiment. A quarter of an hour afterwards Mr Wright came in, and Shires went to him. The three of them had some conversation, and then went up stairs to the office.

‘When they came down again soon after, Shires said to me, “I am going to try an experiment at Garton’s, come with me.”

‘Then we all walked on to Garton’s, Mr Drummond and Mr Wright first, I and Shires following. Shires had nothing in his hand. We went into Garton’s Hotel, not speaking to any one, and passed on to one of the rooms with glass doors beyond the bar. When we went in the door was shut, and no one could see us. Mr Drummond said he was sorry his friends had not come to witness the experiment. I think Mr Wright must have gone out about that time, and there was none in the room but us three. Mr Drummond called for some drinks, but I don’t know what we had.

‘Shires said, “Now, sir, you know if you are bitten you must follow the instructions which I told you before.” He added that he would rather not have anything to do with the affair.

‘Mr Drummond replied, “Oh, but I will have it done.”

‘I said, “What is the object, sir ?” for I did not know but what the experiment was to be trying a snake on some animals.

‘Mr Drummond said, “It is for science I am going to try it,” and whenever Shires mentioned his objections, that was always Mr Drummond’s reply. They kept on talking, and Shires told about the pain he had suffered from snake bites, and what he (Mr Drummond) would suffer.

‘Mr Drummond said, “Oh, I don’t care for myself at all, I will do it for the sake of science.”

‘At this time he was sitting down, and his manner was quite calm, cool, and collected. He did not appear the least excited by drinking anything. My idea was then, and now, that he did not believe that Shires’ snakes had any venomous matter in them. I could see that plainly from his manner. They went on talking, and at last Shires took his snake out from his breast. He had carried it between his two shirts. It was a tiger snake, with a patchy belly, and was three or four foot long. Mr Drummond then undid his left sleeve, turning it up to leave it bare as high as the elbow. Shires felt his pulse, and said he would not let the snake bite just then, the pulse beat too high. At last he said it would do, and he held the snake’s head between his thumb and finger towards Mr Drummond’s arm.

‘Mr Drummond turned his head aside at this, when Shires said, “Turn your head round, sir, and see it done.”

‘Mr Drummond said, “No, it is enough to be bitten by the thing, without seeing it done.”

‘Shires then applied the snake, which bit immediately, about six inches above the wrist. There appeared to be four distinct marks of teeth. When bitten Mr Drummond said nothing; he did not even shudder or wince. Shires took away the snake and put it into his bosom, having applied the antidote to the wound.

‘At this Mr Drummond said, “Oh, but I am not satisfied. Pull that snake out, and cut its head off. I will pay you for it.”

‘Shires pulled the snake out, and laid it on the table, holding its neck, while I cut off the head with a pocket-knife Mr Drummond lent me.

‘When that was done, the gentleman said, “Now, I shall not be satisfied unless you take off your shirt, to see if you have not got another snake about you.”

‘Shires seemed indignant at this, but he did take off his shirt and let his trousers down, to show that he had no other snake. Mr Drummond then wanted the head and body of the snake to be rolled up in paper, and I fetched some, and rolled up the head and body in a parcel, as Mr Drummond said he wanted Professor Halford to experiment upon them. He next gave Shires a £1 note and 5 shillings, which, he said, would do for drinks.

‘During all this time no one knew what was going on. So anxious was Mr Drummond to be private, that when I went out for the paper he shut the door himself, saying that since his friends were not there, he wanted no one else to be present. Shires told him he would soon go ill, but he laughed in a way that showed he felt no ill effects from the bite. I had not fetched the paper two or three minutes, however, when he went off in a swoon, and I saw him leaning back in his chair, his eyes fixed in his head, and Shires bathing his temples with water. I wetted his hands with water too, by means of a handkerchief. The swoon must have lasted ten minutes or a quarter of an hour. He showed he was coming to by noticing the veins in the marble table, then the tumblers, and then he said, “Now, I am all right.” Mr Garton was present while the bathing went on. When Shires was paid he went out, but I did not go with him. Mr Garton came in after I had gone out at Mr Drummond’s request to get some note paper. He (Mr Garton) was very angry at what had occurred, and said he would not have had it happen for any money.

‘When he was right again, and had got the note paper, Mr Drummond took off his hat, and, laying the paper on it, wrote a note to Professor Halford, as I thought, stating how he felt.

‘When he had finished, Shires was away, and he said, “Now we will go up and seek for Professor Halford.”

‘He took a cab from the hotel, and I got in. He drove to Royal Terrace, but found that Professor Halford lived there no longer, but had gone to South Yarra.

‘I asked if I should go with him further, but he said he was all right, and wanted to be alone.

‘He asked me the number of the cab, and I said, “No. 10 Emerald Hill.”

‘He said, “Where is the snake?” and I gave it to him.

‘He then said, “Good night,” and left me, telling me he would be at the Canterbury hall by ten o’clock next day.

‘I declare that I never knew what the experiment was to be till we were in the room. I forgot to say, that after the snake had bitten him he had some drink called for. Mr Drummond was going to have some brandy, but Shires would not let him. He told him to drink only water. Mr Drummond then inhaled the gas from two bottles of soda water, which were opened for him.

‘Next day Mr Drummond did not come, so I and Shires took a cab and went to see him at his house, for Shires was anxious. We were told by a lady that he was very bad, but we were not allowed to see him. Shires tried very hard to see him, but was told that the doctors would let no one in. As we were there, Dr Wooldridge came up and Shires told him who he was, and how he wanted to see the patient. The doctor said he was not the principal medical attendant, but Dr Halford was, and he could do nothing without consulting him. Dr Wooldridge said he did not know whether his (Shires’) instructions had been carried out. In the afternoon, Shires and I went out again, but were refused admittance. We went to Dr Halford, but he was out. We then went to Dr Wooldridge, who said that Shires could not be admitted, Dr Halford was against it. Shires then asked how the patient had been treated, and Dr Wooldridge was very much annoyed at the question, though Shires said he wanted to know because he had been bitten himself, and had seen others bitten so often, that he knew what should be done. If his instructions were not followed, he said, he would not care much for Mr Drummond’s life.

‘I and Shires then went back to Melbourne and at eleven p.m. we heard that Mr Drummond was dead. Shortly afterwards Shires was arrested by Superintendent Lyttleton and Mr Kabat.

‘The fact was so. On that evening Shires was so arrested on a charge of murder. When taken to the watch house he had a snake in his bosom, and since his confinement he has complained of the effect of a snake bite in his leg. He is described in the watch house sheet as a sailor by profession, and forty-five years of age.’

After giving a statement from Mr Garton, *The Argus* then gave Professor Halford’s report on the affair: “At about a quarter of an hour after midnight on Saturday morning last I was called out of my bed by Mr Drummond, of whom I had had no previous knowledge whatever. He brought with him the body and severed head of a tiger snake. (The species is *hoplocephalus curtus* – “dart headed.” It is more of a cobra than *crotalus*, and is, I think, more venomous than the cobra capella, though its fangs are smaller, being like needles’ points.) To the parcel was

attached the following note, written on notepaper in pencil. It runs thus: '(Private) 1-4-1868. Melbourne. I have been bitten by the enclosed snake this evening at 9.30 p.m. It is now 11 p.m. I had it killed in my presence, and it has not been out of my sight since I was bitten by it. Shires applied his antidote. What it is worth I shall leave you to decide. I have been very unwell. I still feel upset. I can write no more at present. W. Drummond.'

"When I opened the parcel the snake's body was still alive, and bounced about the room. Mr Drummond was not at all excited, and presented no appearance of drinking. He told me he had been bitten some hours previously by the reptile held in Shires' hand, and that he wished to know whether the snake was venomous or not.

"I examined it, and found its fangs perfect, and its poison gland apparently full of venom. He told me he had applied Shires' antidote, and had soon felt giddy, with dimmed sight, but he had managed to keep the snake in sight all the while. He told me he did not want my professional assistance, as he now felt much better, and should soon be all right. His face was pale, he complained of nausea, and once vomited slightly outside my door. There was no unsteadiness of gait or other marked symptoms. He showed me his left arm a little above the wrist, where there were four wounds, two corresponding to the poison fangs of the snake he brought. I advised him total care, and offered to go home with him. He repeatedly refused, but I insisted on knowing his address, which he gave me. He then left. After he had gone I dressed, and called on Dr Wooldridge, the nearest medical practitioner, and we followed up Mr Drummond. We found him lying on the sofa. He said he felt much better, but had coughed up a little blood. We ordered him ammonia and rum to be given to him every hour during the night. Next day at nine we found him in bed. He said he had been purged, and passed blood. His skin was warm and perspiring, pulse good, and respiration free. The pupils were now much dilated, and the iris insensible to light. He said he could see but not judge distances properly. He complained of pain in the left shoulder, about the throat and through the articulation of the jaws. We ordered brandy and ammonia every half hour. We saw him several times. During the day he gradually got weaker, though warm and quite conscious. At three p.m. the pulse was 130, and very weak, the pupils still insensible, and I despaired of his recovery. From then till half-past six p.m. he rallied somewhat, but died quietly, as I was informed, at ten minutes past nine p.m. He was always conscious, and complained of no pain in his wound, which, however, became a little inflamed on Saturday morning. One or two cuts with a lancet diminished the redness, the blood coagulating somewhat slowly."

'We understand that besides Drs Halford and Wooldridge, Dr Candler was also with deceased during his illness. He was there as a friend, however, and not as a medical attendant.'

Clarke lost not only a friend but, it seems, the principal backer of the *Colonial Monthly*.

It was not the only tragedy that May day. Harold Love records in *James Edward Neild* that the actor Charles Vincent should have been performing in *Hamlet* that evening, but he was thrown from his horse earlier in the day. He died ten days later in the backyard of his home in Palmer Street, Fitzroy.

‘Death has been busy among us,’ Clarke wrote in the *Peripatetic Philosopher* on 16 May. ‘It has often been noticed how quickly misfortunes follow on each other’s heels. During this fortnight men have almost begun to look in each other’s faces and wonder who is to be the next.’



In mid-1868 two new clubs were established in Melbourne, the Athenæum and the Yorick. De Serville comments in *Pounds and Pedigrees*: ‘The appearance of the Athenæum (and the Yorick) suggests among other things a dissatisfaction with the two existing clubs, the Melbourne and the Union. The first was too grand and the second too much of a mercantile club. That two clubs could be formed at the same time indicates the development of colonial society, in numbers, size and interests. One would have thought that the apparent similarities would have led to the clubs uniting, or to one falling by the wayside. In fact they represented two different Melbournes, the Yorick literary and artistic, the Athenæum committed to more general cultural aims. There was some common membership, but many of the Athenæum members would not have been eligible to join the Yorick, even assuming they had wanted to do so.’

Plans for the Athenæum were under way by April when the proprietor, the architect J. G. Knight, born in London in 1826, advertised for staff and for tradesmen to begin renovations of the building he had leased at 26 Collins Street, formerly belonging to the Freemasons. He and his successor as manager, James Hay, were both masons. A prospectus was sent out to the press and 1 May 1868 *The Age* ran a substantial news report: ‘Our attention has been directed to the prospectus of an extremely desirable enterprise, the establishment of the Athenæum Club ...’

2 May 1868 Clarke wrote in *The Australasian*: ‘I heard something about a literary club being established the other day. The subject was mooted a long time ago. I hope that it will come to the birth. May I suggest, however, as a peripatetic and an impartial observer, that it should be confined, not perhaps to absolute *literary* men, but to men of some pretensions to knowledge of literature. Also I fancy it will never succeed unless a system of rigid ballot is adopted ... There are twenty-five of us; one blackball in ten excludes; and we give you the nicest suppers in the city. Will you join us?’

Clarke added: ‘Why does a man go to a club – to meet those people he wishes to see, and to avoid those people he does not wish to see. If, therefore, he does not like to see A because A has a large and unsightly wart on his nose, or a cast in his eye, he has a perfect right to protest against A’s admittance, and the recognized method of making that protest is by means of a blackball.’

Joseph Johnson in his history of the Savage and Yorick Clubs, *Laughter and the Love of Friends*, writes that letters of invitation were sent to prospective members in early May: ‘A club to be composed of literary men and those taking a special interest in literature, art or science has been started. You are requested to allow yourself to be invited as an original member and to put in an appearance at the Club room (over the *Punch* office) on Saturday evening the 9th inst at 10 o’clock. Yours, Marcus Clarke, Hon. Sec.’

That same Saturday 9 May, Clarke's Peripatetic column in *The Australasian* discussed the 'Golgotha Club' in a piece later reprinted as 'A Quiet Club' in *The Peripatetic Philosopher* volume: 'I have lately joined a club called the "Golgotha." It is literary, scientific, artistic, and inexpensive (1s. entrance fee, 2d. annual subscription); but it is very exclusive and very mysterious. All my acquaintances have attacked me on the subject of the "Golgotha Club." Everybody wants to be admitted. Everybody wants to know the secrets of the prison-house, and as Timmins, one of our number, incautiously told his wife that we keep a skull on the mantelshef, there is much suspicion and terror abroad. I may briefly mention, however, that the story of the newspaper lad being scraped to death with oyster shells at a late supper, and buried in the back kitchen, is not absolutely true in all its details; also, I may, without breaking faith, refute the accusation made by a friend, that the members sit on tubs around the room, smoke green tea, and drink neat kerosene out of pewter pots. More I cannot reveal.'

Green tea is unoxidized China tea. Drunk in sufficient quantities it allegedly produces hallucinations. This is the theme of Sheridan Le Fanu's story 'Green Tea' in *In a Glass Darkly* (1872); 'the creepiest book I have for a long time seen,' Clarke has a character remark of it in one of his Noah's Ark columns in *The Australasian* some six years later. But green tea was something that was drunk. To refer to smoking it, or not smoking it, raises a possibility that the tea might have been, in accord with contemporary slang, marijuana.

A core membership of the Yorick was already in existence, variously said to be based on the group that met in Frederick Haddon's rooms in Spring Street (according to the Yorick *Reminiscences*) or at the Café de Paris (according to Mackinnon). Haddon was editor of *The Argus*. Hutton writes: 'To break the monotony of Melbourne weekends he would put the word around that he was holding a "symposium," usually on a Saturday night, for regular contributors to the press, literary freelances, poets, artists and writers ... a mixed bill of stories, songs and excellent brandy.' When Haddon moved into Dr Aubrey Bowen's rooms in Collins Street there was no suitable large room for the Saturday night meetings. Clarke also seems to have moved into Aubrey Bowen's around this time, and there is a photograph of Clarke, Haddon and Bowen together. Bowen, born in Warwickshire in 1837, was a founder of the Eye and Ear Hospital in Melbourne. He was married to a granddaughter of the scientist Joseph Priestley.

'Clarke, in conjunction with some dozen literary friends, started a modest club,' Hamilton Mackinnon wrote: 'The Yorick Club is the outcome of the literary and Bohemian – analogous terms in those days – spirits who used then to assemble nightly at the Café of the Theatre Royal to discuss coffee and intellectual subjects. These gatherings grew so large in the course of time that it was found necessary, in order to keep the communion up, to secure accommodation, where the flow of genius, if nothing else, might have full play without the interruption and intrusion from those deemed outside the particular and shining pale. Accordingly a room was rented and furnished in Bohemian fashion, with some cane chairs, a deal table, a cocoa-nut matting and spittoons. In this the first meeting was held, in order to baptize, in characteristic liquid, the club. The meeting in question debated, with the assistance of sundry pewters and pipes – not empty, gentle reader – the subject warmly from the first proposition made by Clarke, that the club should

be called “Golgotha,” or the place of skulls, to the last of Carrington’s “Alas, poor Yorick!” which name was accepted as appropriate, and the somewhat excited company adjourned to a late Saturday night’s supper at a midnight eating house, too well known to name.’

Initially the group met at Nissen’s café in Bourke Street, but the regulars there objected to the noise they made. So they leased a room in the *Punch* office, 74 Collins Street, at £1 a week. Joseph Johnson notes that it was next door to *The Argus* office, and Mueller’s hotel could be reached through a passage from the club room. According to Hutton, in its early days Mueller’s, famous for its beefsteak suppers, catered for the club until two o’clock in the morning. Hugh McCrae records of the first meeting in *My Father and My Father’s Friends* that they sat on saddleback-chairs made up of bundles of newspapers, drank beer out of pint pots and early the next morning George Walstab went round with burnt cork blackening the faces of those asleep.

The Athenæum’s premises were rather more splendid. In his history of the club, de Serville quotes from the lengthy description in *The Argus*, 29 June: ‘The dining-hall itself, which has a very elegant appearance, is 55 ft. long by 30 ft. broad, and is arranged somewhat in the style of a café, with tables to seat parties of eight, well lighted by an open-framed lantern-roof, the beams of which are decorated with red and gold; and with its lofty walls, coloured green of a particularly delicate shade, the room has a very cheerful aspect, while a further agreeable effect is produced by an ornamental border of mauve and red, carried round the walls at their union with the ceiling.’

4 July *The Age* announced: ‘The Athenæum Club will be open to members and their friends this evening; but as the arrangements are not quite complete, the restaurant portion of the Club will not be available until Wednesday next.’



The Yorick Club Minute Book lists the committee of the 30 May 1868 as G. C. Levey (chair), F. W. Haddon, M. Clarke, A. Telo and B. F. Kane.

Mackinnon records: ‘The first office-bearers of the club were – *Secretary*, Marcus Clarke; *Treasurer*, B. F. Kane; *Librarian*, J. E. Neild; *Committee*, J. Blackburn, G. C. Levey, A. Semple, A. Telo, J. J. Towers.’

George Levey, born London 1835, was editor and proprietor of the *Herald*, Haddon was editor of *The Argus*, Clarke, Semple, Telo and Towers were journalists, Neild was a doctor and *The Australasian* drama critic, Kane was a civil servant, and Blackburn was a civil engineer.

Others amongst the sixty-four foundation members included Butler Cole Aspinall, the Rev. Dr J. Bleasdale, Charles Bright, Curtis Candler, Thomas Carrington, Gowen Evans, Adam Lindsay Gordon, W. E. Hearn, Henry R. M. Humphreys, Hamilton Mackinnon, George Gordon McCrae, John Ogier, G. W. Rusden, J. J. Shillinglaw, James Smith, Jardine Smith, James Stiffe, G. H. Supple, and G. A. Walstab.

In the literary and journalistic world of 1860s Melbourne, the writers for the different publications readily knew each other. With the founding of the Yorick Club they provided

themselves with a forum for meeting, late night drinking and planning further publications. The world of newspapers and journals was the common ground not only for writers, freelancers, editors and management with a career path in the press, but also for politicians, lawyers, doctors and others who found it a useful medium for participation in public debate.

In due course members included the writers, journalists, editors and freelancers Henry Kendall, Patrick and James Moloney, Nathaniel Walter Swan, Henry Gyles Turner, Garnet Walch, Duncan Watterston and R. P. Whitworth. Along with them were Hugh George the manager of *The Argus*, Augustus Tulk the foundation Librarian of the Melbourne Public Library, George Coppin the actor and theatre manager, Charles Horsley the musician, John Castieau the prison governor, the police inspector and artist Thomas Lyttleton, Captain Standish the Chief Commissioner of Police, the politician Sir John Madden, and J. G. Knight the architect and founder-proprietor of the Athenæum Club. At various times Clarke seconded applications for membership from Aubrey Bowen, Louis L. Lewis, Henry Kendall and Edward Penny, and proposed Howard M. Bindon, the Dublin-born, University of Melbourne educated barrister, a gentleman radical who later was Ned Kelly's defence counsel. The entrance fee was two guineas and the subscription two guineas, payable quarterly.

De Serville remarks of the Yorick in *Pounds and Pedigrees*: 'Although the poorest of the clubs, it was in its own way as exclusive as the Melbourne Club, rejecting candidates who could not demonstrate an interest in the arts or sciences.' He notes that a proposal by George Walstab to allow actors to join, 13 June 1868, was thwarted. The actor Walter Montgomery was a member of the Athenæum but not the Yorick; George Coppin, the actor and theatre entrepreneur, however, was a member of both.

Joseph Johnson notes that visitors to the colony could be made honorary members. This category allowed Montgomery to be admitted. Richard Horne, long resident and now about to return to England, donated some prints and engravings but nonetheless was refused, despite a petition from a dozen members that the rules should be relaxed for him. His request to be made an 'honorary corresponding member' was also refused, the committee responding that it had no power to appoint members to this category.

Needless to say, it was a men only club, and needless to say no one writing about it seems to have felt the need to remark on this. This was their heyday of men's clubs. And these were the great years of bachelor literature. Even if some of the bachelors were married, like Kendall and Gordon. Some were yet to be, Clarke in July 1869, George Gordon McCrae in July 1871, Patrick Moloney in 1876. Some, like B. F. Kane, A. Brook Smith, James Moloney and Captain Standish, held out till the end and never married. The Yorick Club was a space where bachelor literature could continue to be celebrated, secure from the invasions of womankind. A safe haven.

Clarke is generally associated with the Yorick, though for a while he was a member of both the Athenæum and Melbourne clubs as well. A dozen or so members of the Yorick were at various times elected to membership of the Melbourne Club – Butler Cole Aspinall, Aubrey Bowen, Curtis Candler, Marcus Clarke, Gowen Evans, Frank Dobson, William Doyne, F. W. Haddon,

Martin Irving, B. F. Kane, Thomas Lyttleton, G. W. Rusden, A. R. C. Selwyn, Captain Standish, Henry Gyles Turner, W. W. Wardell and Edmond Westby.

Some twenty-six of the sixty-four foundation members of the Yorick were also members of the Athenæum: E. C. Amsinck, Aspinall, Bleasdale, Charles Bright, Candler, Carrington, Clarke, F. S. Dobson, R. L. J. Ellery, William Elsdon, Evans, James Eville, W. B. Gilbert, Haddon, James Harrison, Humphreys, Kane, G. C. Levey, G. W. Moore, Neild, J. C. Paterson, James Smith, R. Jardine Smith, James Stiffe, Telo and Walstab.

But there were other foundation members of the Yorick mentioned in these pages who were not in the Athenæum: J. Blackburn, A. L. Gordon, G. B. Halford, W. E. Hearn, Hamilton Mackinnon, G. G. McCrae, J. C. H. Ogier, G. W. Rusden, Andrew Semple, G. H. Supple and J. J. Towers. Clarke's uncle Judge James Langton Clarke joined the Athenæum but not the Yorick.

The overlap of foundation and committee members of the Yorick and Athenæum may suggest a cooperative wish to establish a club society, as opposed to competition and rivalry. But there was some distinction in the media associations of the two clubs. De Serville writes in *Pounds and Pedigrees*: 'The father and founder of the Yorick Club was generally held to be F. W. Haddon, the editor of *The Australasian* and *The Argus*, and the club was very much the child of those papers, which often published news of it in its early months, when Marcus Clarke wrote for *The Australasian*.' The owner of the rival *Age* and *Leader* group, David Syme, was a foundation member of the Athenæum. Levey, publisher of the *Herald*, was a member of both.



Dr Patrick Moloney is said to have given Clarke a skull, 'or rather a sconce', says Elliott, 'for its articulation was incomplete'. Clarke brought the skull to the club room, the Yorick Club history records: 'It was a remarkable skull, as brown as mahogany, with a bulge at the back of the head that helped to tip it forward when resting on the mantelpiece, where Clarke had put it with a churchwarden stuck between its teeth and placed it on the mantel-shelf with a pipe under its jaw.'

Clarke's friend Patrick Moloney, born in Ireland in 1843, was one of the first two medical graduates from the University of Melbourne in 1867 – a fact Clarke records in his *History*. From 1868 to 1873 he was resident medical officer, and from 1875 to 1898 honorary physician, at the Melbourne Hospital. He set up in private practice in Lonsdale Street in 1874, later moving to 106 Collins Street East.. He was a regular contributor to *Punch* and *The Australasian*. The *Australian Dictionary of Biography* records that 'according to a contemporary "he was hopeless as a teacher of students, but to his fortunate house physician he was a liberal education."' One autumn day Moloney arrived at the hospital and said "Do you know what I should like to be doing today? A drive into the country behind a good spanking horse, a good cigar in my mouth, a bottle of whisky under the seat, and that girl in red from the Gaiety by my side.'" It was Moloney who dubbed the decade 1860–70 'the Golden Age of Australian Literature' as George Gordon McCrae recalled in a memoir of that name: 'A young fellow of something over six feet, of erect carriage, stout and florid, head of a classic model set well upon a pair of broad shoulders, the eyes large, of

a deep blue and slightly prominent; nose straight and long but shapely, the lips full and sensuous, barely concealed by a thin moustache (otherwise he was clean-shaven). He had an abundance of dark, wavy hair which just escaped being black, and trimmed in a manner more suggestive of the professional man than of the poet ... Big, genial, jovial and hearty, he was, being Irish by near descent, blessed with the happiest sense of humour and a fondness for a good joke, as well as with a wit of the keenest and yet the most amiable, but there was a peculiar savour attaching to his letters which it was impossible to read without confessing to their charm; some fraught with an elegant and thoughtful criticism, others charged with rich and poetic imagery, others again bubbling over with the purest bonhomie. All these too expressed with the freshness of youth (sound mind in sound body) bright and incisive, kindly and hospitable.' Randolph Bedford recalled Moloney's later life in *The Bulletin*, 3 August 1911: 'Doctor Pat made a fortune – he was a very skilful operator: retired, went to live in London, and died of want of occupation and the breaking up of a lifelong habit.' Moloney was blackballed on his first application for membership, but was later admitted, along with his brother James, a solicitor.

Clarke had suggested that the club should be called the 'Golgotha' because it was 'the place of skulls'. The official history of the Yorick Club claims: 'he hammered away at the idea all night, supported by several others, Gordon, Kendall and Shillinglaw being prominent.'

There are problems with this account, however. Gordon, Kendall and Clarke were the literary stars of the Yorick Club. Naturally the official history would want to have them together at that historic occasion, whether they were actually there or not. But Henry Kendall did not move to Melbourne until a year later, in April 1869. Clarke seconded his application for membership of the club on 29 July 1869.

Gordon is listed as a foundation member, so he may have been present at the first meeting. His invitation to become a foundation member possibly came from his being a contributor to *The Australasian*. In May 1868 he was living in Ballarat. Possibly he visited Melbourne and went to the first meeting. He is listed as 'country' when his name is recorded in the subscription lists instituted six months later on 30 November. By then he had left Ballarat for Melbourne, so that description allows the possibility that he had initially joined as a country member when living at Ballarat. But he is unlikely to have been an active member until he came to live in Melbourne in October 1868. He paid his subscription on 28 February 1869, and was still a financial member at the time of his death. W. A. Brennan noted in *The Argus*, 4 September 1937, that at some point Gordon inscribed a copy of his *Ashtaroth* for the club's library: 'Presented to Yorick Club with Author's Compliments.' No more than in the book itself did he reveal the author's name.

Mackinnon writes: 'It was at the Yorick that Marcus Clarke first met one of whose abilities he entertained a very high opinion, and towards whose eccentric and mournful genius he was drawn by a feeling of sympathy bordering on affection. Adam Lindsay Gordon, the first poet of Australia, as he was its boldest gentleman rider over a steeplechase course, was that individual ...'

Clarke was certainly present at the initial meeting. According to the 1911 history, *The Yorick Club*, in the end, having failed to persuade the members to call the club the Golgotha, he got very

huffy, and, taking his skull with him, disappeared and did not return for some days. According to Elliott he gave the skull to the actor Walter Montgomery, who had just returned to Melbourne with his controversial and well publicised *Hamlet* at the Theatre Royal. Montgomery used the skull in Hamlet's famous soliloquy, 'Alas, poor Yorick.' Playing opposite him as Ophelia was the young Marian Dunn, who fifteen months later was to marry Clarke.

In his Peripatetic Philosopher column in *The Australasian* Clarke referred to the Yorick as the Golgotha, anyway. So did Kendall in a memoir years later. But that was one of the conventions of writing, whether a column or fiction, finding an appropriate more or less transparent, alternative name.

Huffy or not, Clarke nonetheless was confirmed as secretary of the Yorick club on 13 June, and served in that role until 2 October. He made frequent comments in the suggestions and complaints book. Hutton records that he asked pointedly why the club subscribed to only one copy of the *Colonial Monthly* since that meant that 'five members are deprived of the pleasure and benefit of reading it'. It was a good try, worthy of a committed editor and proprietor. The committee held that one copy was sufficient. On other occasions, Johnson notes, Clarke suggested the club should order the *Weekly Times*, and, in 1870, *The Times* ('the only place where it is to be found in Melbourne is the Melbourne Club') so that members might be better informed on the war in Europe. The Committee acted on his suggestion. The library was an important part of the club. Johnson notes that alongside the major local daily newspapers and weeklies it took the *Saturday Review*, *Spectator*, *Illustrated London News*, *Cornhill Magazine*, *Blackwood's*, *Atlantic Monthly* and *Revue de Deux Mondes* from overseas. Back-issues were sold to members to defray costs. Members donated books. There were portraits of the Queen, Thomas Carlyle and Robbie Burns on the walls, along with a barometer which Shillinglaw claimed was fickle.

Johnson quotes from Clarke's contributions to the suggestion book: 'I would suggest that the "Abomination of Desolation" known as the "Eating Room" be taken into consideration by the Committee. I recklessly dined there this evening and am bound to say that of the many bad dinners I have eaten in the course of a brief but chequered career, the "Yorick dinner" was beyond all comparison the *worst*. I would suggest that the Committee recommend a *clean cloth*; some casual hint of *tenderness in the steak*, and a *suspicion of mustard* in the mustard pot. Also a covering of some kind for the barren surface of the *table*.'

On another occasion Clarke remarked: 'a club in which one can get nothing to eat on Sundays is a curious sort of place.'

After other disputes prompting one member, D. D. Wheeler, to write a note requesting members to keep their tempers, Clarke responded that some tempers were 'not worth keeping.' Alfred Wyatt referred to Clarke as the 'boy nuisance'.

When the committee proposed abolishing the suggestion book, twenty-one members successfully petitioned for its restoration. Gerald Supple suggested keeping it for more serious matters and providing a second notes and queries book in which members could insult each other.

The Yorick Club continued until 1966 when it was incorporated into the Savage Club. The Melbourne Club and the Athenæum both still survive.



Under his pseudonym Jacques, Dr J. E. Neild wrote glowingly in *The Australasian*, 2 May 1868: ‘Go and see Montgomery’s *Hamlet* and then thank God you have lived long enough to enjoy the opportunity ...’

He enthused about Marian Dunn: ‘So special a favourite that even the ladies admire her ... Even without considering that this was the first time Miss Dunn had ever played Ophelia, it was singularly excellent.’

The Argus reviewer was less rapturous: ‘Miss Marian Dunn’s Ophelia does not improve upon repetition. Considering the antecedents of this young lady, it is not surprising to find her unequal to the efficient representation of one of the most difficult parts in the whole range of Shakespeare’s characters. It is no discredit to her that she cannot please equally in burlesque and tragedy and it would be unnecessary to say a word more on the subject were it not that certain injudicious admirers of hers are endeavouring to spoil a really intelligent and promising young actress by absurd and extravagant laudation ... She has evidently been carefully drilled in the stage business and goes through all that she has been taught with accuracy and intelligence. But the art is too apparent ... In the delivery of the words of her part, Miss Dunn is not less unsatisfactory. Her utterance is too rapid and she gabbles through some of her speeches like a school-girl at a breaking-up celebration.’

Elliott speculates that *The Argus* critic might have been Clarke, but offers no supporting evidence.

In Sydney Kendall was struggling. His personal circumstances were distressing. His mother, who was drinking heavily, was living with him and his newly wedded wife.

31 May 1868 he wrote to J. Sheridan Moore: ‘Mrs Kendall has been so ill today that I could not well leave her to see you.’ He added a postscript: ‘I am afraid that I have married a chronic invalid.’



In early June 1868 Clarke had a serious riding accident that put him out of action for the next two months. In a letter written from the Melbourne Club, or at least on its notepaper, 15 August, he apologized to Cyril Hopkins for not having replied to him: ‘I have had several letters from you and have been, for the first time since I left England, guilty of the sin of silence ... The reason is a valid one. I have been as nearly dead as it is possible for a man to be. I was thrown from my horse over a jump, and got concussion of the brain, during which I could neither write nor read ...’

Hamilton Mackinnon writes: ‘The accident, it appears, occurred as follows: - Clarke had, in company with the late Walter Montgomery, been out to a meet of the hounds, and on their return home he was dared to take a fence.’ Montgomery, however, wrote in *The Argus*, 18 May 1869: ‘we both received serious injuries whilst schooling our horses at Goyder’s.’ F. C. Goyder was the proprietor of the stables in Royal Lane, Bourke Street and the Hunt Club Hotel in Little Collins

Street. W. J. Hammersley recalled encountering Montgomery and Gordon riding in the Hunt Club Hotel yard. Mackinnon's story seems to have confused a fall in the yard of the Hunt Club Hotel with a fall at a Hunt Club meet. In the *Austral Edition* Mackinnon removed all reference to Clarke's attending a meet, writing simply: 'he met with a serious accident through his horse throwing him and fracturing his skull.'

Mackinnon continues in the *Memorial Volume*: 'In his usual reckless way he charged the timber, which the horse failed to negotiate, the result being a hard hit, a bad fall, the horse injured, and the rider rendered senseless by a kick on the head from the struggling animal. So severe was the blow that many days passed before the patient recovered consciousness, and to his dying hour he carried the mark, an indentation at the back of the skull, easily discernible. Indeed, there can be little doubt that had it not been for the motherly care and nursing of his fellow-lodger and pressman, Telo, and the assiduous attentions of Mr Westby and others, he would not have recovered from the accident. And ever afterwards he occasionally betrayed symptoms indicative of the shock his nerves had received, his memory at times, and suddenly, utterly failing him.'

Telo, like Gordon, knew about riding accidents. He was lame as the result of one, and went everywhere with a knobbly stick, neither useful nor ornamental, contemporaries complained. Robert Whitworth, another of Clarke's friends and collaborators and a fellow member of the Yorick Club, had also suffered a bad riding accident, which put to an end his job as a horse-breaker and riding master.

In his obituary of Telo in *The Leader*, 11 October 1879, Clarke writes: 'I was clever enough to fracture my skull, and was for some weeks senseless – for many weeks helpless. Alfred Telo nursed me like a woman through that long and tedious illness; when I was well enough to bear light and sound, he would read Russian or German novels to me, translating them into English as he read, without pause or hesitation. When I recovered we went away together, and then I discovered for the first time what a storehouse of entertaining anecdote was the mind of my friend. To his pleasant discourse I largely attribute my rapid recovery.'

According to Henry G. Turner in the *Melbourne Review*: 'The gravity of the case may be estimated from the fact that he remained unconscious for three weeks, and his recovery was mainly due to the incessant watchful care of Dr Aubrey Bowen, who, in consultation with Dr Fitzgerald, succeeded in literally bringing him back to life. It was some months before he was able actively to return to brain work, and there is no doubt that under certain conditions, his mental powers were liable to be temporarily impaired as a consequence of the accident.'

There was no Peripatetic Philosopher column on 13 June, nor did it appear for the following five weeks.

Though *The Australasian* suspended the Peripatetic Philosopher column and found other material to occupy its space, the *Colonial Monthly* had to continue and, along with it, the serialization of *Long Odds*. Clarke's friend and associate George Walstab took over running the magazine and supplied the July and August episodes of Clarke's novel. Walstab later acknowledged his role in a letter to the *Lone Hand*, August 1907: 'It is true that I wrote some chapters of *Long Odds* while Marcus was suffering from the results of a fall from a horse, and

this was the reason why he dedicated the book to me.’ Whether he wrote the chapters up from Clarke’s notes, or whether Clarke already had a roughly completed manuscript is unknown. The latter seems the most likely, given the comparatively minor changes Clarke made to those chapters when the novel was published in book form.



10 June 1868, Charles Harpur died from phthisis, tuberculosis, at Eurobodalla. ‘Australia’s first native born poet’, a plaque on his grave there records. Kendall recalled in ‘About Some Men of Letters in Australia’ in the *Australian Journal*, October 1869: ‘I met Harpur for the first time about six months before his death. He was then suffering from the earlier effects of the disease which terminated so fatally; and he appeared to be the almost empty shell of his former self. He had the frame, and must have had in his younger years, the strength of a giant. The man was a noble ruin – one that had been scorched and wasted, as it were, by fire. His face looked as if it had been through the hottest furnaces of sorrow.’ Harpur had never got over the death of his son the previous year. Ann-Marie Jordens in *The Stenhouse Circle* quotes Harpur’s own epitaph that he sent to Stenhouse: ‘Here lies Charles Harpur, who at fifty years of age came to the conclusion that he was living in a sham age, under a sham government and amongst sham friends, and that any world whatever must therefore be a better world than theirs.’

Kendall’s memorial poem on Harpur appeared in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 7 July 1868, together with a long obituary.

No soul he was to sit on heights
 And live with rocks apart and scornful:
 Delights of men were his delights,
 And common troubles made him mournful

The flying forms of unknown powers
 With lofty wonder caught and filled him;
 But there were days of gracious hours
 When sights and sounds familiar thrilled him.

Within six weeks of each other Kendall’s two literary mentors, Michael and Harpur, had both died.

30 June 1868 Kendall wrote to George Oakley: ‘Harpur died of consumption on the 9th instant. He was not so hard up however as you think. In him we have lost a brilliant table-talker, a true poet, and a remarkably eloquent prose writer. For my part, I have always ranked Harpur above Deniehy. The former had what the latter lacked, i.e., *aboriginal* power.

‘The poem which I omitted to send in my last was “Moss on a Wall.” I wrote it in accordance with a suggestion in one of your letters; and I am therefore, anxious to have your opinion on it.’

He continued: ‘Your “Blue Dinner” arrangement was published in the *Sydney Evening News* and our local *Bell*’s. I never see the *Melbourne Church News*, but I noticed the other day a set of

lovely verse bearing your name or initials in an old *Australian Journal*. I am sorry to hear of the illness of Marcus Clarke. When Horne was in Sydney, I met him at a public dinner to which he was invited. He certainly did not impress me at the time. *Orion*, however, is a very fine poem of the *Endymion* class, minus the superb *sensuous* element in Keats' work. The great blemish of Horne's poem is its want of Ionic warmth.'

Melbourne was beckoning, and Kendall was establishing contacts there. His letter to Oakley contains his first known mention of Marcus Clarke, but he had evidently already been in correspondence with Oakley.



4 July 1868 Gordon wrote a letter to the editor of *The Australasian*: 'Sir, I read an account of the run with the Melbourne hounds from the Essendon Pound in your columns last week. I have not the least idea who your correspondent, "Actæon," may be – nor does it much matter. Perhaps he never saw the run, and almost certainly he never saw the best of it. At least, if by any chance he was in the first flight, I can only say his version of what took place is a most extraordinary one. If he was not there, he might have taken the trouble to make himself better acquainted with some of the facts. An account in some respects more utterly at variance with the truth I have seldom read, and this can be proved so easily, that I do not suppose he would care to reply in his own name as I do in mine. – A. L. Gordon.'

Actæon replied: 'We have all heard of the little boy who cried for the moon, and we also know that he did not thereby obtain the object of his desire; so similarly, I fear, that Mr Gordon will not have gained any addition to his hitherto unassailable fame by his diatribe of last Saturday on my account of the run. Let me assure him that I did see the meet, and saw him there. If, as he asserts, my account was in any way "extraordinary" I confidently say it was so only in accuracy ... It is true that I may not have chronicled that gentleman's performance as he desired, but I think he will be frank enough to admit that he was "thrown out;" that is to say, admitting that he was in the same parish with the hounds, that he was not with them when they ran into the fox ... I am sorry for Mr Gordon, and I am disappointed in him. Until I saw his letter on Saturday he came nearer my ideal cross-countryman than anyone I could immediately mention; but that a gentleman of his large fame and unquestionable horsemanship should seek a newspaper credit to which he was not entitled – to find Mr Gordon, the dare-devil horseman, the winner of desperate steeplechases, pining for a puff in print, is, to say the least of it, another striking instance of the eccentricity of great men. As to disclosing my name, had I thought it advisable to publish my name when I first became your correspondent I would not then have assumed a *nom-de-plume*, and if I did so now at Mr Gordon's challenge, I would show myself as weak as he has already shown himself to be. Yours &c, "Actæon."

Actæon was Frank Madden, who had set up as an attorney in Collins Street in 1869, and was supplementing his income by selling pen and ink sketches, especially of horses, for which he had

a lifelong enthusiasm. In 1894 he entered the Victorian parliament, serving as Speaker 1904-17. He was knighted in 1911.

Frank Maldon Robb writes: ‘Gordon in Ballarat, a member of the local Hunt Club, had received an invitation, in common with his fellow members, to journey to Flemington, where Mr Madden (as he was then) was not only riding, but reporting the racing for the Melbourne *Argus*. The next morning, when the report of that particular day’s sport appeared, there was no mention of Gordon’s horse, or Gordon’s position in the race at the finish. It was a very wet day, and it was nothing to the poet’s discredit that he did not win, but he wrote a letter to *The Argus* complaining of the silence maintained in the report regarding him. Mr Madden, now that Gordon’s guard was down, ventured the next day on some rapier thrusts in print at this “dare-devil steeplechaser crying for a puff in print.” Thereupon Gordon called on the editor, and asked for the name of his adversary. This was at first refused him, until in answer to his insistent queries as to the reporter’s name, he was asked, “What do you want to know for?” whereupon he replied, “that I may go and shake hands with him, for he has given me as good a drubbing as ever I got in my life.” Eventually he appears to have got the necessary name and address, for soon afterwards he appeared in the office of Mr Madden’s father, and as the tall, lanky man entered the son’s room saying, “Is your name Madden?” he was greeted with the recognition, “Oh! You are Gordon!” The friendship thus begun continued until Gordon’s death, and on many subsequent occasions they rode steeplechases side by side.’

Madden recalled Gordon in Humphris and Sladen: ‘A long, lean man, who for the most part affected the costume and manner of a horse-breaker. He had sharp features, with bushy overhanging eyebrows, deeply-set eyes, with a very peculiar glitter – a somewhat ragged beard completed a most uncommon face. He was moody, taciturn and sometimes melancholy. But when in company with those he liked he could be a most delightful companion. To meet him casually one would never consider him an educated man, as from long intercourse with rough people in the bush he had picked up their way of speaking, and to a great extent he preferred their company to those of his own class, or more properly speaking to those who, because they had money, considered themselves to be of his class.

‘There is no doubt that he rated horses above men, and his love for them had become the ruling passion of his life, although he was by no means a good judge of a horse.’

Humphris and Sladen reproduce a sketch by Madden of Gordon in his racing colours ‘made after a race at Flemington’. ‘That tilt of the peak of the racing cap was quite characteristic,’ Madden remarks.



There are numerous accounts of Gordon’s horsemanship by others who knew him at this time. W. J. Hammersley, the sporting editor of *The Australasian*, recalled in Humphris and Sladen: ‘A more dare-devil rider never crossed a horse. As a steeplechase rider he was, of course, in the very first rank, and his name is indelibly associated with many of the most famous chases run in

Victoria, although, in my opinion, and I think in that of many good judges too, he was deficient in what is termed “good hands,” and when it came to a finish was far behind a Mount or a Watson.’

George Gordon McCrae recalled in Humphris and Sladen: ‘Of course you will remember how Gordon took his jumps in hurdle-racing with the feet jammed completely home in the stirrup and at the critical moment with the back of his head laid actually back on the crupper – from which position he returned easily and gracefully as the horse came over.

‘Gordon’s hair, of a dark brown, was plentiful and slightly wavy, his complexion bronzed; his hands which were large and bony were brown.

‘He was very short-sighted, yet I never knew him to wear glasses.

‘Once I asked him how he managed in steeplechasing. He replied, “Well enough, but I see through a mist and never beyond the ears of the horse.”

‘In reading, his book or paper was held up close against his face, his nose almost touching the page.’

In June 1868 Gordon had another riding accident. He wrote to John Riddoch, 7 July: ‘I should have written to you long ago, but my hand has been very bad; it was a compound fracture of the third finger bone in the hand (not the actual finger) from a kick, and I was not careful of it at first, so it got very bad, and the doctor said he would cut off my hand if I did not keep it quiet. I have just got the splints off, and the hand is all right, the bone having set with a big lump. I cannot write much. This is my first letter, but in a day or two I will write a long account of things in general. I got your telegram, and did not buy the greyhound Trump. I am not sure that he could beat Black Hawk on his merits. Please excuse this scrawl. I am glad my hand has got right at last, but it is not strong yet.’

George Riddoch recalled in Humphris and Sladen that Gordon used to say: “‘I could keep out of – (whatever it was, going away to steeplechase and what not) if I only had George by me.”

‘Once when he had been asked to ride in a steeplechase at Ballarat about which he had great misgivings, meeting George Riddoch, he asked if he might come to his station for a visit. Receiving a welcome response the two rode together to Mr Riddoch’s place ninety miles on. The day after their arrival Gordon went to his host and said that he felt he ought to go to Ballarat. Might he have a horse sent on for a remount in the early morning.

“‘I won’t do anything of the kind, Gordon,” said Mr Riddoch, “you came here to keep you away from that steeplechase.”

“‘Very well, then,” said the poet, “I shall go without your help,” and as nothing could dissuade him, Mr Riddoch sent the remount on. And Gordon was in Ballarat a few days after and rode in the race and had one of his worst falls, so his presentiment was right. History repeated itself afterwards in Melbourne. Gordon met Mr Riddoch one day in Collins Street and entreated him not to leave him because people were urging him to ride in a steeplechase and he had a presentiment against doing it.

“‘Well,” said Mr Riddoch, “I have arranged to go over to Tasmania with a friend, but if he doesn’t mind waiting, I’ll put it off till the race is over.”

‘The friend could not wait, so Mr Riddoch went, and Gordon rode in the race and had another bad fall.’



Clarke bounced back from his fall. 15 August the Peripatetic Philosopher resumed his column, explaining that he had been in gaol: ‘The true artist-soul gathers materials from all sides, and I trust that my forthcoming work, *Two Months at Pentridge*, by the author of *A Summer at the Hulks*, will tear away the veil of official turpitude ...’ It was an allusion to the convict memoir serialized the previous year in *The Australasian*, Owen Suffolk’s *Days of Crime and Suffering*; but jokes have a way of coming strangely true. Two years later Clarke was to spend his summer, and much longer, plunged into the convict records with *His Natural Life*.

The same day, 15 August, he wrote to Cyril Hopkins, reporting his riding accident and continuing: ‘I am at present in rather good circumstances. I am making a decent living by article writing and hope shortly to see the *Colonial Monthly* a success. I write leading articles for three dailies (say, I write five leading articles a week), write theatrical criticisms, edit the magazine, and contribute an article to a weekly paper, and in all I make an average of fifteen pounds a week.’

Maybe it was because of all these journalistic commitments that he resigned as secretary of the Yorick Club at its committee meeting of 2 October. McLaren cites the minutes: ‘It was unanimously agreed upon the motion of Mr Haddon seconded by Mr Semple that the committee while accepting Mr Clarke’s resignation, regrets very much to lose the services of an able and efficient officer, who has been thoroughly identified with the club since its formation.’



25 September 1868 Maggie Gordon left Ballarat to spend some time with her father in South Australia. Gordon, having sold up everything in Ballarat, went to stay with Robert Power at his house Myrnong in Toorak. He was there for October and most of November, supervising the training and exercise of Power’s horses. Saturdays he rode with the Melbourne Hunt.

Cuthbert Fetherstonhaugh names Robert Power as a staunch friend of Gordon’s, along with John Riddoch and William Trainor. The Powers arrived in Australia from Waterford in Ireland in 1839. David Power settled in Mount Gambier in 1851, becoming a justice of the peace there in 1853. His brother Thomas made a fortune from boiling down animal carcasses for tallow at Gardiner’s Creek in Melbourne. He was partner in a stock and station agency, Powers, Rutherford and Company, which his two sons, Robert, born in Galway in 1835, and Herbert, born 1836, ran after his retirement. “‘The Powers that be” in the front rank ride,’ Gordon wrote of their horsemanship in ‘Ye Wearie Wayfarer’. They were both members of the Melbourne Club and, de Serville records in *Pounds and Pedigrees*, Herbert was an old friend of Captain Standish, the Chief Commissioner of Police. In his history of the Victoria Racing Club, *A Century Galloped By*, Pacini records that the two brothers together with Standish and George Watson were at the

meeting at Scott's Hotel in 1864 when the club was established, and Herbert Power, Standish and Watson were members of the first committee. John Adams writes in 'The Powers that Be': 'Robert was only twenty-five years old when in 1860 he commissioned architect Francis Maloney White to design Myrnong, his new home in Boundary (Kooyong) Road. Myrnong was built on 17 acres with views across Gardiner's Creek. The big, square whitewashed houses on the hillside overlooked pleasant gardens and rich riverside fields, where the sport-loving Power brothers loved to train and exercise their hunters.'

6 October Gordon wrote to John Riddoch: 'Mrs Gordon went away by the steamer *Penola*. She was anxious to get a change, and I was glad for many reasons that she should go away for a time.

'I gave up the stables on the first of this month. I have paid altogether £350 for rent. Let me tell you some good news now before I go to the bad. I have had some money left to me by the deaths of my father's first cousin, and of my grandmother. I ought to have received it long ago. It is not much, but it will set me straight.

'I heard last mail from my uncle, Hamilton Gordon. He wants me to go home to England. It seems I am the nearest heir to an entailed estate called Esslemont in Scotland. He thinks it a certainty, but I fancy there is a flaw in the entail. Huntly Gordon, the last owner, left it by will to his daughter, and as the flaw in the entail has not been proved, my uncle wants me to go home and appeal against the will.

'I do not think I shall go, even if I could get the estate; having no male heir it would be of no use to me beyond my lifetime, and that is very uncertain.'

Esslemont in Aberdeenshire had been bought by Robert Gordon a century and a quarter earlier, and entailed on a male heir. If the entail was still valid none but male heirs, however remote, could succeed to it. According to Sladen in Humphris and Sladen, Robert's grandson Huntly Robert Gordon died without male issue and the property passed to his half-brother, Charles Napier Gordon, who also died without male issue. Charles left the property to Huntly's daughter Anne. She had married Henry Perkins Wolrige in 1856 and inherited Esslemont in 1864 and Hallhead in 1867.

Gordon continued: 'I have been awfully bothered about money difficulties; but I think I have now paid off everybody but you and Lawson. Getting in the money that is still due to me here is very difficult. But I have sold off everything, and though many things were sacrificed, I did not do so badly after all.

'Mrs Gordon and I did all the work between us. Indeed she did a great deal more than I, all through the troubled time. She has worked like a trum; although I never told her how desperate things were looking with me, she suspected that much was wrong and she tried hard to cheer me up and keep me straight, and did not worry me. She has more pluck in her little finger than ever I had in my whole body.

'When I lost the Ballarat hunt cup on Maud I thoroughly gave in, and refused to ride Cadger for the Selling steeplechase, saying that it was no use.

‘She said, “Don’t give in like that, old man; you’ve gone too far to back out now, and no one else can ride the horse. It’s only a small stake, but every shilling is of consequence to us now. I was always against racing, but you’ve taken your own way, and now you must carry it out.”

‘So I rode Cadger and won. Then Viking won the hurdle race. So I didn’t do so badly.

‘You have no idea how sick of horse-racing and steeplechasing I now am; but when a man gets so deep into the mire, it is hard to draw back. I have to ride three races in Melbourne next Saturday, though I am scarcely fit to ride a donkey at present.

‘I do not fancy I shall have any luck, but my luck can’t possibly be worse than it has been. I would like never to see a horse again, let alone ride one.

‘The stables have been very badly managed, and Mount, though a well-meaning fellow, has a head worse, if possible, for business than mine. But after that bad fall of mine, I was bound to leave the books entirely in his hands, and a pretty mess he made of the accounts. I could hardly have done worse myself.

‘Since that heavy fall of mine I have taken to drink. I don’t get drunk, but I drink a good deal more than I ought to, for I have a constant pain in my head and back. I get so awfully low-spirited and miserable that if I had a strong sleeping-draught near me, I am afraid I might take it. I have carried one that I should never awake from. You will perhaps be awfully shocked, old fellow, to see me write in this strain, but I am not exaggerating in the least. If I could only persuade myself that I am a little mad, I might do something of that sort. I really do feel a little mad sometimes, and I begin to think that I have had more trouble than I can put up with, I could almost say more than I deserve, though this would probably be untrue.

‘When I parted from my wife on the pier and saw the steamer take her away, I felt sure I should never see her again; and when I got back to Ballarat, and went into the empty house, I was very low-spirited. I used to smoke all night long. I could not sleep, and had to take a stiff nobbler in the morning. But I got through my work somehow, and settled up all my business.

‘I am going to send you the new *Colonial*. It is a very good magazine. Marcus Clarke, the editor, is a very nice young fellow.

‘I returned to Melbourne yesterday, and am staying with Mr Robert Power at Toorak. You shall hear further from me by the next steamer, if I get through Saturday’s work.’



Gordon and Clarke had much in common. Both came from upper-middle class families, with strong military traditions. Both had been brought up in England, though one had Scottish and the other Scottish and Irish heritage. Both had been rent away from their milieu and plunged into the new world of Australia, Gordon at age twenty, Clarke at seventeen. Both had never really known their mothers. Clarke wrote to Cyril Hopkins: ‘I never saw my mother, nor a portrait of her; knew none of her relations, did not even know her maiden name. I knew that her Christian name was Amelia Elizabeth. She was only seventeen, I believe, when my father married her. She was a

Catholic and was sent by my father to a convent school abroad to be educated before he married her. She died when I was three years old.'

'These notions concerning his mother were not,' Cyril Hopkins writes, 'altogether accurate.' Bulwer Lytton's *A Strange Story*, published in 1862, the year before Marcus left England, has a similar event: 'The young lady's father ... had died some years ago, leaving his only child penniless, and had bequeathed her to the care and guardianship of Sir Philip. The orphan received her education at a convent near Paris; and when Sir Philip, a few weeks since, arrived in that city from the East, he offered her his hand and fortune. Sir Philip is murdered, however, before the marriage can take place.'

Cyril offers an account which he was given by Marcus's cousin, Sir Andrew Clarke: 'The drawing-room floor of the house in Vere Street was rented by W. Hislop Clark from a couple named Matthews ... Their only daughter, very young when Mr Clarke first went to live there, grew up under his eyes, so to speak, and from an engaging child developed into a beautiful girl, gifted with unusual intelligence and great sweetness of disposition. Becoming intensely interested in her, he took upon himself the cost of her education and had her sent to a then very fashionable school at Kensington kept by a Mrs Teed, Campden House, where the best masters were provided and the accomplishments deemed necessary for the daughters of the upper-middle class instilled. Marcus himself was under the impression that his mother had been educated in a convent school in France or Belgium, but if so this could only have been (I was told by the same authority) for a short period after leaving the school at Campden Hill. Be this as it may, she was a well-educated and an accomplished girl at the time of her marriage to his father, who took her to the home he had provided in Leonard Place, Kensington.'

Gordon's mother was alive, but did not stay settled in Cheltenham with her husband. Her son saw little of her. The poet's cousin Frances Gordon reminisced in Humphris and Sladen: 'She had the gentlest, most charming manners when she was in a good temper, but was absolutely unreasonable when she was not, and I believe thought nothing of throwing a knife or a poker at any one.' Frances added further: 'As to his mother, I never heard *the slightest idea* of her being *out of her mind in any way*, but she was most awfully passionate and had no idea of controlling herself and consequently did not make her family happy, and then she had fits of penitence; she was very low-church. I know she was constantly going away for her health. I know one winter she went to Madeira, and other times she went to Italy, but I don't know how far she was really delicate or fancied she was.' Hutton quotes from a letter of Gordon's mother in the Park Low papers, written to Gordon from 6 Northwick Terrace, Cheltenham, 12 December 1857: 'How I do wish you would write to me, I have been at home i.e. in England six months during which time (such an inexpressibly sad time of widowed bereavements to me) I have not beheld your handwriting ... You will be surprised to see that I am writing from the very house inhabited during the latter period of his life by your dear noble father, and in which he breathed his last less than ten days after my return to Cheltenham. I have been in two other lodgings but was so v. uncomfortable in both, that I at length resolved upon coming to these ... although for a long time I thought I should not be able to bear associations that would so sadly recall him – I felt too that I

could not be happy anywhere, and that I should perhaps derive some melancholy satisfaction if only a melancholy one, in being where he had been ... how I long to see you. Have you no thought of coming home to England? I suppose the expense of the voyage might be a difficulty? I wish I could obviate this by sending you a remittance – at present and for some time hence though, I fear it will be impossible as I have not cleared off all our debts ... but D.V. if I should live to pay all I owe, I shall after that be at liberty to forward you £50 or more out of my little income. But do not wait for that ...’

Fellow Yorick Club member George Gordon McCrae claimed a distant kinship with Adam Lindsay Gordon. McCrae’s mother was Georgiana Huntly Gordon, illegitimate daughter of the 5th Duke of Gordon. In a letter to the composer Alfred Hill, George’s son Hugh McCrae wrote: ‘Speaking of Gordons generally, you ask how do I come in? – very joyfully; though awkwardly, you might think – through Jane Graham. The Duke gave her a baby (afterwards my grandmother) to keep: thus by a kind of bent relationship I am cousin to Byron as well as A.L.G. Item: the family walls at Hawthorn, Victoria, were covered with pictures of the duke.’ There is no record as to whether George Gordon McCrae and Adam Lindsay Gordon ever speculated on their kinship.

Agnes Hamilton-Grey in *Singer of the Dawn* quotes McCrae’s recollection of how he, Clarke, Gordon, Kendall, and others ‘frequently met at the *Colonial Monthly* office’. Sutherland elaborates in Turner and Sutherland: ‘Gordon now began to have many literary acquaintances, and liked well to drop into the office of the *Colonial Monthly* where a medley conversation, with a literary undercurrent, but many a digression to sport or adventure, and many a laughter-punctuated discourse of the kind comprehensively termed “yarns,” made the dingy walls of ink-stained plaster associated with scores of cheery reunions. But the company to Gordon was a little dangerous. It was a shrine not only of the Muses but also of Bacchus, and whilst the whirling tobacco-smoke made misty the air, the office-boy would be sent forth to the place at the corner, and oft as he returned, the tray in his hand and the jingle of glasses denoted how far removed the writer crew were from anything like a bigoted teetotalism.

‘Gordon was made a member of the newly-formed Yorick Club; and there increased his intimacy with McCrae and Telo, Shillinglaw and Marcus Clarke, and at a later date came to know also Henry Kendall. At this time he wrote all his letters from the club, and used to be a favourite there, by reason of his incisive talk, his gentlemanly ways, and his growing power as a poet. He was always felt to be eccentric, but singularly manly and considerate.’



George Gordon McCrae wrote to *The Argus*, 20 March 1912: ‘During the whole of his stay in Victoria Gordon wore a full beard, no portion of his face being shaved ... The only sun-picture, so far as known, to be had here, comes from Adelaide, and shows an absolutely clean-shaven face. This is by no means the Gordon of Flemington, or the “Yorick,” and the portrait is insipid altogether when compared with the features set off by the full beard and moustache. Gordon was

not a “very much photographed individual,” and I can quite believe that both the clean shave and the photograph of himself in this guise were the results of a pure freak.’

McCrae stresses the point in Humphris and Sladen: ‘Speaking of Gordon whom I knew very well indeed, I have never yet seen a picture of him that brought the real man before me. There is an early (and awful) photo taken in Adelaide representing him as clean-shaved as a priest. This though a fearful libel is much liked by people who never saw him or watched the play of his features. There is no expression in it whatever. My Gordon was a man with a hairy face – a kind of Esau – not shaved in patches, a bit of clean chin or cheek here, and a small allotment under hair here and there. No! He wore a not too long russet beard, with moustaches a little lighter in tone run into one. There is not a single bearded likeness to be seen in Melbourne, but everyone who knew him in these parts will be sure to be disappointed, if the statue now projected comes out with an utterly smooth face – Gordon’s eyes, none too large, were of a steely-grey, and lighted up to blue as he became excited in conversation, his nose straight, long, thin and pointed, his lips (what one saw of them) thin and determined, his forehead deeply lined and the crows feet at the corner of his eyes, carried at times much merriment in them. His figure and legs denoted a man who had spent much of his life in the saddle. A manly figure and a remarkable one at that – altogether.’

But W. Park Low in *The Real Adam Lindsay Gordon* records that Maggie disputed the accounts of Gordon’s beard: ‘I never saw him with one. When he returned from Western Australia he had a rather long growth because he was unable to get a shave before getting home, but he soon had it shaved off. I never saw him ride a race at any time with whiskers, although he often wore short side-boards.’ Park Low notes that Gordon had only two photographs taken during his married life, and he was clean shaven in both of them.

McCrae wrote a further memoir of Gordon published posthumously in *Southerly*: ‘Adam Lindsay Gordon, take him all round, might have passed for a silent man, one who would prove his friendship by coming to sit beside another for the better part of an hour without uttering a word; the society finding its expression in a cloud of mingled tobacco-smoke. I never heard him sing nor have I met anyone who had; nor do I believe he danced, at all events not after his arrival in Victoria.

‘It would have been reckoned a stroke of rare good fortune to have received a letter from Gordon, for he seldom put pen to paper in the way of correspondence if it could possibly be avoided.

‘A man that wanted a lot of knowing, but the knowledge once acquired (there never was any ice to be broken), he became a delightful companion; breaking clean away from his ordinary habit, he would talk, though at first chiefly in an undertone, of the books ... poems, poets and romances that he most admired; of horses, hunting, cavalry-charges and duels. Here, his steely-grey eyes flashing with enthusiasm, he would exclaim aloud. There was no manner of affectation about him, whether in dress or otherwise: he was distinguished in no way from the ordinary run of men.’

McCrae added: 'It used to be remarked of him from time to time his avoidance of liquor; which, in the midst of an all-round drinking society, had the effect of keeping him very much outside. He would take a glass of wine out of pure politeness, but there drew the line, over which nobody could lead him. One day, rallying him on his abstemiousness, he took my hand and placing it on his head, laid one of my fingers in a long deep hollow in the bone – I shuddered all over. It was the answer to the question – a skull fracture received in one of his falls in the field ... I do not believe that he cared much for company, but, like Kendall, preferring the strict *tête-à-tête*.'

However, McCrae's remark on Gordon's reluctance to write letters is questionable. In an extract from one of his letters to John Riddoch, *Advertiser*, 19 August 1895, Gordon remarked: 'I do not keep copies of my letters, and do not read them over when once written, as if I do this I generally tear them up, and it is better to write a bad letter sometimes than not at all.' Gordon may not have corresponded with McCrae. They were in the same city, after all. But he certainly wrote to others. After he left South Australia, Tenison Woods recalled: 'I heard from him repeatedly.' Blackmore's reminiscences in *The Age*, 3 June 1899, refer to 'a mass of letters which he received from Gordon at different times.' More than twenty-five letters from Gordon to John Riddoch have been published and almost a score to Gordon's school friend Charley Walker survive; so do letters to Maggie, his uncle, George Riddoch, William Trainor, and Henry Kendall, amongst others. And there is one letter to Clarke:

'Yorick Club.

'Dear Clarke, Scott's Hotel, not later than 9.30 sharp. Moore will be there. Riddoch and Lyon, Baker and Power, besides us; so if "the Old One" were to cast a net – eh? – Yours, A. Lindsay Gordon.'

Major Baker and the Riddoch and Power brothers were known friends of Gordon; Lyon may be the Captain Lyon with whom Gordon had been hunting at Mount Gambier before his famous leap.

It is the only surviving letter Gordon wrote to Marcus Clarke, a letter that was, according to Mackinnon, kept by him sacredly.



Having given up the Ballarat stables and livery business, Gordon needed to find some source of income. There was not much to be made from his writing. The only other possibility was training horses and riding in steeplechases. As a gentleman amateur he could not ride for money, but if he had a stake in a horse he could claim a stake in any prize money. Humphris and Sladen note that Major Baker became his chief support here. A memoir by 'the travelling correspondent of the Melbourne *Leader*' in *The Press*, Christchurch, 23 September 1891 recalled: 'In 1868 he blazed into fame by winning an important steeplechase for Major Baker on his horse Babbler, and it is an open secret that the backers of the horse, Captain Standish and some other gentlemen still alive, who had won a large stake, pressed more money upon Gordon than he was willing to accept.' J.

K. Moir records that Baker had bought a new horse, Babbler, for 120 guineas at auction in Melbourne on 25 April. Gordon rode Babbler for Baker in a series of races, winning the Hunt Club Cup at Flemington in October 1868, the Ballarat steeplechase in December, and coming third in the Grand National at Flemington in January 1869. And it was on Major Baker's Prince Rupert that Gordon had his last bad fall in March 1870.

Major Thomas Durand Baker was born in 1837 and entered Cheltenham College in 1846, the year in which Gordon's father was appointed to teach Hindustani there. Baker fought in the Crimean War, the Indian Mutiny and the New Zealand Maori wars, and in 1866 was appointed Deputy Assistant Adjutant-General for Australia and New Zealand. In 1879 he was a Brigade Commander in the Afghan war. Humphris and Sladen record: 'Baker was at the fall of Kumassi, and became the general who won the battle of Charasiab and commanded a brigade in Lord Roberts' crowning victory of Kandahar. He was knighted, and died in 1893.'

The Australasian, 1 August 1868, had run a feature on 'Cricketers of the Season' that singled out Baker for attention: 'Next in the list is Major Baker, a gentleman who "came out" on the MCC turf last year, and whose forte is batting. He is a likely man to get runs as he plays with a good straight bat. His best place is in the slips, and he cuts in a pretty good form. He is very sweet on forward play, but weak on the off-side.' Gordon is not known as a cricketer. Indeed Humphris and Sladen quote a contemporary at Cheltenham College, W. de Salis Filgate, remarking that he was 'not fond of cricket and football, though very fond of horses'. C. D. Mackellar recalled seeing Gordon's bat amongst the memorabilia his widow preserved, but there are no recollections of his playing. But Baker shared his enthusiasm for horses, and they became friends.

Another military man Gordon rode for was Major Robins, owner of the horse Banker of Gordon's poem 'Banker's Dream'. Frederick Vaughan reminisced in Humphris and Sladen: 'Major Robins lived and raced in Melbourne for a long time and Gordon rode for him; the Major purchased Australian horses for the Indian government in those days. I owe it to Gordon myself that from his teaching I was able to ride a buck-jumper and consequently able to break in my own colts and fillies in after years.' Vaughan continued: 'I knew Gordon well – intimately – he was hypersensitive, strangely retiring, very quiet, hard to know at first, very genial when well known, clever, brilliant in conversation, when you could get him going, in many ways simple as a child, no idea of business and cared little about anything except horses and writing poetry and prose also. Many sheets of as I thought well-written manuscripts have I seen him tear up as perhaps one sentence or even one word annoyed, exasperated him; the work of hours, perhaps days, thrown away. He was always either scribbling or riding and training horses, of whom he was passionately fond, and he understood horses, their nature, &c. Very long in the thigh, he had not a pretty seat on a horse, but he was a marvellous rider – could ride the rowdiest horse in the world: he was made for buck-jumper riding and steeplechasing *was* his forte, he could *make* horses jump or go through their fences. He had no fear, and although short-sighted rode his fences with great judgment.'

Gordon's mention of Clarke in his letter to John Riddoch, 6 October 1868, was almost an afterthought, tacked onto the end of a long account of the stables, his finances, and his horse-racing. And some mention of his future plans: 'Harry Mount has promised to ride Dan O'Connell for the Garrison cup, it is only over hurdles and I think Dan can win. Mount can ride better than I can over hurdles or on the flat though not so good over big fences. Viking is disqualified for the Melbourne Hunt cup which is only open to horses that have been hunted in Melbourne, but Power wants him to run for the Metropolitan for which he will be too heavily weighted for he is only a pony though a wonderfully good one. Watson (my old enemy) has a horse called Taverton Tod in the race and he has too much influence with the handicappers. I promised long ago to ride Babblar for Major Baker if I had no horse of my own in the hunt race. Baker is a real good fellow but I would not ride if I were not anxious to beat Watson and Pyke who are the men that prevented the Ballarat horses from being entered, which as our hunt race was open to Melbourne hunters is a jolly shame.'

Gordon's 'old enemy' George Watson was born in 1829, the son of an Irish Master of Fox Hounds, and had arrived in Melbourne in 1850. He was lessee of Kirk's Horse Bazaar in Bourke Street, the leading sale yard for horses, and he had interests in Cobb & Co. and other coach lines. He founded the Melbourne Hunt Club in 1853. Michael Cannon records in *Melbourne After the Gold Rush* that it hunted kangaroos, foxes and red deer on the Werribee properties of the Chirnside brothers, and at other times at Cheltenham and Hawthorn. Gordon was a regular participant. Watson was also a member of the first committee of the Victoria Racing Club in 1864. According to the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* he was 'one of the best known and most popular men of his time'. He was also known to be irascible, as Pacini records in *A Century Galloped By*.

In *The Bulletin*, 30 January 1929, Hugh McCrae wrote of 'Gordon and his Friends': 'Brittle-tempered; once, in a dispute about horses, he pushed George Watson down, and, kneeling on his chest, began to strangle him. Watson worked free, clubbed his riding-crop, and, had not partisans of both sides run between, might have killed him. Months afterwards Mrs Gordon was thrown in the hunting-field; she became unconscious. Watson, dismounting, stripped himself of his coat to make a pillow; at the same time he sent a boy with his cap to bring water from a creek. Some of the water he used for washing her face; the rest was given her to drink. Adam, half dazed from a similar fall, staggered towards the couple. Marcus Clarke, who was present, explained what had happened, and tried to steady him a bit; but there was no withstanding the ardent husband.

"Maggie! Maggie! Are you hurt?"

"Adam dear, it's scarcely anything."

'Gordon lifted his wife's head, and touched the wetted coat.

"Whose coat?"

'Somebody answered, "Mr Watson's, sir."

'For a moment the men stood separated; then, suddenly, their hands met, clapping together with a joyful sound.'

De Serville observes in *Pounds and Pedigrees*: ‘Hunting was one of the few areas of great energy and danger where women could compete with men on equal terms. It was the age of the Empress of Austria, the solitary, fearless Diana who was the toast of hunting fields throughout Europe ... Acheson French’s two daughters, Mrs Connolly and Mrs Robert Power earned places in Cuthbert Fetherstonhaugh’s list as accomplished and intrepid horesewomen (“no fence would stop them”).



The Argus, 12 October 1868, reported the Melbourne Hunt Club meeting. Their correspondent, clearly addressing a smart, metropolitan readership, rather than horsey enthusiasts, may have been Clarke, who had written a couple of similar pieces on the Melbourne Spring Meeting and the Melbourne Cup the year before.

‘From a descriptive point of view, the Hunt Club meeting was not a success. From whatever cause – the absence of His Excellency the Governor or the heat of the weather – the course was not crowded. The sun was oppressively hot at midday, and the possibility of dust and scorching perhaps accounted for the small attendance. Consequently the lack of things to see makes the less to describe, and the less there is to describe the more difficult it is to write a description. Everybody knows what a race-course is like, and nobody wants to hear any more of the “Aunt Sallies” and “doodle-’em-bucks;” but it is perhaps a source of interest to read that “there was a brilliant and fashionable crowd,” and to reflect that you yourself were an atom of the brilliant and fashionable whole. Such flattering unction would be pleasant, and would thrice replay the expenditure of silks and laces. Therefore, let it stand recorded that the Grand Stand on Saturday was a mass of colour and brilliancy, and that, although there were perhaps fewer individual roses in the “rosebud garden of girls,” the brilliancy of those who did condescend to bloom almost atoned for the absence of those who did not. Putting aside all sordid calculations of price – intrusive economical considerations – the appearance of the lawn was highly picturesque; and as ladies do not of course go to races for any other motive than love of the picturesque, they reached the summit of their ambition. To the right of the grandstand the bookmakers were busy as usual, but they were also less noisy than usual, which was gratifying to notice; but the saddling-paddock was remarkably empty, and looked not unlike a cricket-ground without the cricket. To the left of the grandstand were the carriages, looking, when viewed from the hill, like so many flies upon a billiard-table. Above the carriages was the hill; over against the hill was the flat.

‘The flat on Saturday was the most interesting part of the race ground. Suppose that the other portions have been treated of: suppose that we have walked up and down the lawn, gone in and out of the refreshment rooms, “laid our money on” with one of the bookmakers, seen the horses saddled, and even, as a last resource watched a race; suppose that we had gone up on to the hill, and holding our hats upon our heads with one hand, defied the win, and played “doodle-’em-buck” with the other; suppose that we have lost reasonably at “red-blue feather and star,” and have drawn the worst horse in several sweeps; suppose that we have got rid of the man who

always wins “£10 old fellow, by the merest chance,” and who wants to toss for sovereigns in consequence; suppose that we have lent our race-glass for *one* second to our friend, who never brings his own, and have hopelessly lost him for at least half an hour; suppose that we have had our toes trodden on, and our pockets picked, in fact nauseated ourselves with the delights of the hill; suppose that we have retraced our steps, and have gone down into the carriage-reserve, in the vain hope of meeting the man who asked us to lunch and have been informed by a grinning groom, whose mouth is unnaturally distended with pie, that “Master has just gorne, sir”; suppose that we have wandered about among strange carriage-poles, and spiked ourselves with strange curious hooks and swingle-bars; suppose that we have been insulted by offers of premature driving into town, and lingually fought for by Hansom cabbies, who, utterly oblivious of the fact that they have each received retainers from three different people, and have promised to “wait” for five more, are eager to turn an honest penny at our expense; suppose we have passed the enclosure where the police van is grimly stationary – that police van from whose lofty roof we notice a detective gazing over the course with an expression of calm indifference to crime in all its arithmetical progression, from pitch and toss to manslaughter; suppose we drop all knowledge of our acquaintance with the fashionable world, and mingle with the people. The people have a burning desire for ginger beer in all its forms; they do not disdain beef (cut with a knife like the sabre of Don Fernando Gomersalez), and are not averse to pork pie and greasy slices of animal food wrapped in yesterday’s newspaper. The people are for the most part flannelly – that is to say, they affect Crimean shirts in preference to linen ones, and like to wear these garments much rolled up about the sleeves. They like to sit on the fences and to pat the top rails with their hands encouragingly, as though they would say, “It’s no use trying to break you, is it, my boy?” They like to lie on the grass, and smoke short pipes, and view the gorgeous persons in the stand with the greatest complacency. Indeed one gentleman, who was lying beside his lunch, and feeding himself at intervals with a jack-knife, appeared to think that the whole thing was got up expressly for his entertainment, and if he had been a drayman, and a reader of *Grote’s History of Greece*, would have doubtless made a remark relative to the Great Games, the amusing of the people, and *panem et circences*. There was not much gambling down on the flat. Demos did not seem to care much about it, and though a few “drinks” and “nobbles,” and perhaps a half-crown or so, were won and lost, he was not violently demonstrative in his hazarding of coin. Those lucky fellows who had money went up on the hill for the purpose of “laying it out” to greater advantage; and, judging from an uproarious party we observed on the road home, they succeeded. In point of fact, everybody seemed tolerably satisfied, and Mr Gordon, we should think, most of all. To win three races – one of them the “big thing” of the day – does not happen to a man very frequently in his lifetime. But, talking of Mr Gordon, brings us to more serious matters ...’



Despite his doubts and lack of enthusiasm, Saturday, 10 October 1868, Gordon achieved his legendary feat of winning three races at the Melbourne Hunt Club meet. *The Argus* reported, 12

October: 'The Hunt Club Cup was won easily by Babbler. Standard-bearer, a perfect outsider, won the Hurdle race; Viking, the Metropolitan Steeplechase, and Playboy the Military Cup. The Selling Steeplechase was won by Cadger; his owner, Mr Gordon, was extremely successful, riding the winning horses in three out of the five events which composed the programme – the Hunt Club Cup on Babbler, the Metropolitan Steeplechase on Viking and the Selling Steeplechase on Cadger.' This triple success ensured his fame as one of the most successful steeplechase riders in the country.

The serious racing enthusiasts and the rural, horsey fraternity were catered for by *The Australasian's* report, 17 October 1868: 'One of the best day's sport ever held by the Melbourne Hunt Club came off today, over the Flemington race-course. In the morning a northerly wind, raising clouds of dust, with a glaring sun above, portended uncomfortable weather, but shortly afterwards Boreas veered to the southward, and the day became delightfully cool and pleasant. The Hunt Club Cup was the chief object of ambition amongst the members themselves ... The great Babbler and Maid of the Wannon had the most admirers, and although the former carried the crusher of 13 st. 4 lb., he was freely backed at 2 to 1, especially when it was seen that Mr Gordon had donned the straw and black for the occasion ... The favourite sailed away in his usual lolloping galloping style and at the riverside his admirers were put in a funk when he stuck Mr Gordon up at a fence there. He refused twice, but Mr Gordon forced him over the third time of asking, and he took it so slovenly that he came down on his nose, but his rider's fine horsemanship soon had him on his legs again.'

A correspondent in *The Australasian*, 2 January 1869, corrected the account that Babbler fell: 'Babbler only blundered on to his nose; he did not fall. Mr Gordon recovered his seat very cleverly, also without a fall.'

P.P., in 'Sketches in Pig-Skin' in *The Australasian*, 17 October wrote: 'Had I been asked on Saturday last which horse to pick I would have chosen Acrobat, but Babbler was in a good humour, and I should have lost my money. As it was, I doubt if anyone but Mr Gordon could have won with him. Not that I think Mr Gordon's riding is above criticism. He is too hot and too quick for my money, but his heart is undeniable. He means to win and he *will* win if he can, which means a great deal.'

After the race Cadger, Gordon's horse for so many years, was sold at auction for £40.

The following month, on Saturday, 7 November, Gordon won the VRC Steeplechase at the Spring Meeting at Flemington. Peeping Tom, at the time the chief racing writer in Victoria, reported the event in 'The Late Melbourne Spring Meeting', *Australasian*, 21 November: 'Mr Power's horse Viking never made a mistake; the way in which Mr Gordon eased him over the more difficult of the fences, such as the three obstacles in front of the Grand Stand, clearly exonerates that gentleman's character from rashness. Viking was considered an unlikely starter. On the evening before the event the odds were ten to one against him, but three to one when he and his rider appeared in the paddock fit and ready for the fray.'

P.P. enthused in 'The Turf, our Horses and our Prophets' in *The Australasian*, 14 November: 'They have no riders like Mr Gordon in Sydney, and no horses like Viking or Ingleside. Nowhere

in the world could such a sight be seen as in the Steeplechase when Viking, admirably ridden by Mr Gordon, went over a course with leaps that would stop every horse and rider in Great Britain. They might go a little faster in the old country, but such a succession of big jumps is only to be met with in Victoria, and in Victoria alone can the men be found who have the nerve to go over them at racing pace.'

It seems likely that P.P. was *The Australasian's* 'Peripatetic Philosopher', and 'Sketches in Pig-Skin' was another series of articles by Marcus Clarke, this time on horsey topics. Pig-skin was a colloquial term for horse saddles, which were made from pig-skin.



Marcus Clarke and Gordon feature in an episode in 'Sketches in Pig-Skin, by P. P, about Nothing in Particular' in *The Australasian*, 7 November 1868, the same day that Gordon won on Viking at the VRC Spring Meeting. Humphris and Sladen identify the rider called 'Reckless' as Gordon. In *Adam Lindsay Gordon: A Biography* in *The Australasian*, 16 December 1933, Eileen Kaye names F. C. Goyder, the proprietor of the stables in Royal Lane, Bourke Street and the Hunt Club Hotel in Little Collins Street, as another participant.

P.P. wrote: 'Larking is a most objectionable practice. It has always been accounted so by the best judges, and the thirst for unnecessary risking of life and limb has frequently been animadverted upon. But it is very enjoyable. Like a good many other wicked deeds, it is pleasurable. If a man has a stiff fence before him, and a good horse under him he will often risk his neck upon very slight provocation. Of such a stamp is my friend Reckless. Reckless is a tall thin man who looks like an ancient Viking and rides like an Assyrian of old.

'The other day I went out to ride with Reckless. There were four of us in all. Reckless had brought two friends, both of whom were admirers of his, and was prepared for any amount of falls. Both his friends were horsey – that is to say, both of them were interested in horseflesh, and each "fancied himself" as a rider. All the way down to our destination Reckless was taking timber, and it was with much difficulty that we could dissuade him from attempting something like thirty feet of fly over a stone-banked gutter, with a strong four-rail at each side of it. I believe, indeed, that he would have gone at it after all had we not all three agreed that the jump was impossible for anything four-footed. He is usually rather wild in his ways, but on this particular day he was wilder than ever. He had the misfortune to be mounted upon a "little mare," and we all know what an encouragement to folly that is.

'We were close to St Kilda, where a broad drain runs towards the sea, faced on each side with bluestone, and with a high-sawn fence on either side. We were looking at this obstacle and I hazarded the remark, "That's a yawner; but I have seen horses in Leicestershire that I believe would fly the lot." Reckless was riding a little bay mare named Maud, and the words were hardly out of my mouth when he wheeled the mare round, and trotted a few yards with the intention of having "a go" at the drain; and it was all Marcus Clarke could do to induce him not to make the attempt. That he would have tried and have killed the mare, and have probably broken his own

neck, I am convinced; and it was not until he had jumped nearly every fence about the park that he seemed to calm down ... For my part I do not believe in wild exploits *gratis*, and as I happened to be mounted on a serviceable though somewhat way-worn cob I declined to risk my valuable neck for the amusement of my friends. Not so Reckless. Name a jump, and he was on fire to ride at it. Curtius and his famous gulf were nothing to him.'

P.P. diagnosed in Gordon the madness that characteristically seized the owner of a jumping mare: 'He risks his neck needlessly twenty times a day, and cannot pass a haystack without a desire to ram her at it. If you express a doubt as to the powers of the fetish he worships, you make him your deadly enemy, while to over-jump him would probably lead to pistols for two and coffee for one. In short he has lost his identity and has succumbed to a nightmare of a most terrible kind. My friend Reckless was in this condition. He has ridden many steeplechases, and won some of them, and is a man whom one might reasonably expect to have seen the folly of most things. But he has not. Riding is a passion with him, betting isn't. But such is his fondness for sport of some kind that having known him I can quite realize the notion of the gentleman on his death-bed, who stretched out one lean and ghostly hand toward his equally moribund friend and said in a voice broken by the death-rattle and husky with torment, "Jack, my ribs are broken, old fellow, and I can't live long. You must die too, Jack, in an hour or so, and though you win the race I won't give in – up there – old fellow, I'll f-fly you for a fiver!"

'I am certain Reckless would ride against Death on the pale horse if the grim old fellow would only give him six pounds and a bit of a start.'

P.P. concluded: 'I meant to relate how Reckless sat down and jumped on to the railway corner, and then took hold of the little mare and sent her "a cracker" along the sand turf; how we measured the gutter, opposite to the old Belle, and Reckless was on fire to jump it, and how we discussed racing and gave each other tips for all sort of events. How we went in and had a look at Lantern and admired Blue Jacket; in short, I had intended to give you a pleasant chatty account of our day's amusement and to have made myself and the little brown cob quite a feature in the entertainment.'



17 November 1868 Gordon wrote to John Riddoch: 'I sent you a photograph of Lyttleton's picture which I hope you got. Lyttleton is drawing a large picture of a steeple-chase that was run here the other day, for a Mr Bennet who is going to England and wants to take home a representation of Colonial cross country work. He (Bennet) gives £20 or £25 to Lyttleton for the painting and Lyttleton has promised to try and get me a photograph of it which I will send you if I get it as I am one of the prominent figures.' 23 April 1869 Gordon wrote to C. S. Doughty, his tenant at Mount Gambier: 'I have take the liberty of enclosing a photo of Lyttleton's picture which Herbert Power won at the Art Union and gave me a few photographs of the same.' *The Argus* reported, 19 December 1868: 'We have seen two pictures painted by Mr T. H. Lyttleton, superintendent of police, which are worth notice. Mr Lyttleton has been for years back favourably

known in private circles as an artist of considerable ability, but it is only during this last year or two that any of his pictures have been exhibited to the public. Mr Lyttleton's peculiar faculty is that of animal painting, and he is very happy in catching likenesses of horses. The two pictures to which our attention has been drawn were painted, we believe, for Mr T. B. Bennet. The subject is that of the last Melbourne Steeplechase, viewed from the course. In the larger of the two Mr Lyttleton has seized the moment when Mr Gordon on Viking is "topping" the last fence in front of the stand; close behind him come Babbler and Brewer. Alice is down, and Mr Pearson, on Ingleside, is flying the second fence. Ingleside is the best bit of character animal painting we have seen in the colony. The likeness is admirably presented and the "points" of the horse hit off with great fidelity. The second picture – to our thinking the more artistic of the two – represents the same race from a different point of view. The artist has taken his station in the enclosed paddock, and gives us a distant sketch of the Benevolent Asylum, on the top of the hill. Mr Gordon, on Viking, is leading, followed by Ingleside and Babbler, while the grey is "coming up" at his fence in the background. The peculiar style of Mr Gordon's seat, and method of handling his horse, are happily caught. The picture is full of spirit and life.' The second painting is reproduced in Lorraine Day's *Gordon of Dingley Dell*.

Thomas Lyttleton was a friend of Herbert Power, for whom he had produced a series of paintings, and a fellow member of the Yorick with Gordon, as well as a member of the Melbourne Club and the Athenæum. A foundation member of the Victorian Academy of Arts, Lyttleton was well known as a painter of horses. He also kept fighting cocks. He was born in 1826 at Hagley, the family's property at Longford near Launceston, named from the Worcestershire seat of the family that includes the eighteenth-century poet George, the first Baron Lyttleton, subject of one of Samuel Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*, and the jazz musician Humphrey Lyttleton. Thomas Lyttleton joined the Victorian police force in 1852. He was one of Standish's dining companions. De Serville writes in *Pounds and Pedigrees* that when appointed Chief Commissioner of Police, 'it was symptomatic of Standish's attitude and priorities that he soon replaced Superintendent S. E. Freeman, the chief officer in the city of Melbourne, with Thomas Lyttleton, "a gentleman and a nice pleasant fellow," but lacking Freeman's knowledge, experience and devotion to duty.'

John Sadleir in his *Recollections of a Victorian Police Office* remarked: 'Lyttleton by birth and education was a gentleman, and was one of the very senior officers, but he was wanting in some of the qualities for so important a position. He was not careful in his conduct in private life, and he never seemed to take his duties seriously.' Annie Baxter Dawbin recorded in her journal, 24 April 1862: 'Colonel Hadden says Tom Lyttleton is one of the two wildest most dissipated men he ever met.'

In 1869 Lyttleton painted Gordon in *Adam Lindsay Gordon Steeplechasing at Dowling Forest Racecourse, Ballarat*, now in the La Trobe gallery, and in *Hunting Scene, Gonn Station, Murray River*, now in the Warrnambool art gallery. At the 1869 Melbourne Public Library exhibition he showed eight oil paintings, including *The Start* and *The Finish*, possibly, according to the *Dictionary of Australian Artists*, the extant pair of oil paintings of the 1868 VRC Spring

Steeplechase won by Gordon on Viking. Lyttleton's painting illustrating Gordon's 'How We Beat the Favourite' was exhibited in Sydney in 1875. The Park Low papers preserve a photograph of a painting by Lyttleton featuring Gordon on Ballarat and Sam Waldeck on Canary, together with a photograph of Waldeck, Lyttleton and Herbert Power. Drawings of Gordon by Harry Stockdale, Frank Madden and an officer of the 14th regiment also survive. In 1970 Gordon's portrait appeared on the six cent Australian postage stamp. Gordon's poems inspired a number of paintings including Arthur Streeton's *One Ray of Red Fire* and *Above us the Great Grave*, Charles Conder's *Where the Wattle Blossoms Wave*, Frederick McCubbin's *Whisperings in the Wattle* and *At the Falling of the Year*, and Norman Lindsay's *The Sick Stockrider*. In August 1886 Melbourne's Buonarrotti Club held an exhibition of paintings by artists illustrating Gordon's work: 'Messrs Mather, Mason, McCubbin, Roberts, Colquhoun, Blanche and Cherry, Addison, Mrs Parsons, Misses Cherry, Brotherton, Clark, Baskerville, Messrs Tucker, Humphrey and Miss Sutherland,' David Hansen established from the club's minute books. 'The Gordon craze is becoming popular,' *Table Talk* remarked, 7 March 1890. *The Argus* reported 19 December 1911 that John Longstaff had been commissioned to illustrate the lines 'Below sky and water, The blow came and caught her' from 'How We Beat the Favourite'. There are twelve colour plates by G. D. Giles in the volume of Gordon's poems T. N. Foulis published in Edinburgh in 1912. Some twenty artists were commissioned to illustrate E. A. Vidler's *Adam Lindsay Gordon Memorial Volume* in 1926, including Will Ashton, Gustave A. Barnes, Penleigh Boyd, M. Callaway, Robert Carmen, Victor Cobb, A. Colquhoun, George H. Dancey, Hans Heysen, C. E. James, Frank Latimer, E. Jackson Morris, Charles Nuttall, Frederick G. Reynolds, Florence Rodway, John Shirlow, E. Spowers, M. Napier Waller, J. S. Watkins, W. S. Wemyss, Leslie Wilkie and Christian Yandell.



Gordon's letter to Riddoch was overall a gloomy one: 'I am taking exercise now and doing work, and I sleep pretty well and eat fairly, and I only drink one glass of grog when I go to bed. Though I smoke nearly as much as ever I never touch opiates in any shape now. Really, I had so much trouble and anxiety for a long time that I gave in at last and got careless especially after my wife left me. I was ill, too, and all my pluck and spirits are, I know, purely animal. I never had any moral courage, and though I could bear up when I felt well and strong I had no heart when weak and ailing; and at one time had so many troubles pressing on me at once that it seemed almost impossible for me to weather them. I do not even now realise the fact that I am so nearly clear of debt.'

The win at the Spring Meeting had been an opportunity to make some money but, he continued, he messed that up. Even when he avoided recklessness in his riding, he managed to be financially careless. 'I did not make much money by the steeplechases which I won, hardly any at all by the last and best of them. It was bad management, for though I do not hold with betting as a rule, still it is not much worse than speculation of other kinds, and a man is justified in risking five pounds when he has a good chance of making it a hundred. Besides, I've swallowed too

many camels now to strain at a gnat. The truth is I made an awful mess of the whole affair. Power wanted me to keep my share, one half of Viking, but I preferred to sell it and get the £75 at once. About £15 of this I proposed to lay off at ten to one. Well, I got the horse down to ten to one on the market by a justifiable ruse, but I left another man to get the odds on for me, and he failed to do this. I only got the half of what I had intended winning – £25. This only covered some double events which I lost.’

He explained in a despondent note: ‘I do not take much pleasure in riding now, and none at all in racing. I did not go near the racecourse on “the Cup” day, nor yet on the Friday; and after the steeplechase was over I locked myself in one of the empty horse-boxes in the saddling paddock and smoked a pipe while the other races were being run, for which I have been chaffed a good deal since by some of my acquaintances.’

However, there was still the practical issue of finance: ‘I ride for money now, and if I were to stop a little longer at this game, I should not be so particular as I ought to be. If you could find me any sort of work that I could earn enough money to live by and keep my wife in clothes and bread I will swear against ever going near a racecourse again if you like. I am heartily sick of the life I have been leading, and I do not even care for riding. The only ride that I have really enjoyed since my last fall was the hunt in which Mrs Gordon rode so well alongside of me.’

Nonetheless, he still persisted.

‘At the same time I do not think that I ought to be squeamish about refusing a good offer and Baker’s offer is really a good one. I think I can win that stake as Ballarat as the best horses will be reserved for New Year’s day.’

He added a postscript: ‘I ought to have written for *The Australasian* this week but I’m afraid that I can’t write anything worth reading now ...’

Sladen in Humphris and Sladen quotes another paragraph which they attach to this letter: ‘I ought to have made some money lately for fortune, as if tired of persecuting me, has given me a turn in many ways, but I have not done nearly so well as I ought to have done. I have had no heart to back my luck, and I might not have such an opportunity again. If I made a little money I should be quite contented to leave this “gay and festive scene,” which I find awfully wearisome. I am better than I was, though I have been ailing on and off with headache and pains in the back, but I am getting used to these, and they come and go pretty much as they like. I am certainly stronger in some ways than I was. Physically I am not weak; as far as muscular action goes I can take as much exercise as ever when the fit is on and the headache off. I have been very temperate lately and do not smoke quite so much, though I do it more than I ought perhaps.’

In the same letter of 17 November Gordon returned to the matter of the Esslemont inheritance: ‘There is not the least doubt that I am the heir, my Grandfather and Charles Huntly Gordon’s father were brothers – Charles Huntly (the owner of Esslemont) had no legitimate children, in fact was never married, and my father (the eldest of my Grandfather’s children) was the next of kin, there being no first cousins to C.H.G. except my father and his two brothers, to one of whom (my uncle Hamilton) I have written.

‘It is equally certain that the estate is entailed by the old Scotch law of entail – and though Hore Head or Haw Head was cut off through some flaw in the entail as I heard. That was done when Charles Huntly’s father was alive by father and son jointly. An entail of this sort can only be made void with the consent of the next heir.

‘Still, I do not ever think I shall get this property. I believe the Esslemont entail can be made invalid though I can give no good reason for my belief. I wrote to my uncle Hamilton when Blackmore was here, showed him the letter and even inserted one or two things from his dictation which I think were needless.

‘Blackmore did not seem to enjoy Melbourne much. I am such awfully dull company and he does not know many persons here I fancy – still he visited Irving the rowing man and professor of schools with whom he had a pull on the Yarra and he dined with Smith the librarian, I believe, and with Robertson. I told Power a little about him (Blackmore) and Power was sorry I had not asked him out to his place – I have been much better since Blackmore left.’

Blackmore had been library clerk to the South Australian House of Assembly since 1865. The Smith he dined with was probably James Smith, a former editor of *The Argus*, who had been Parliamentary Librarian in Melbourne since February 1863. In *James Smith: The Making of a Colonial Culture* Lurline Stuart records that Smith was currently planning to revisit Europe for two or three years and on 21 November applied for leave of absence at an annual salary of £1000; unfortunately his application gave Premier McCulloch the idea that Smith’s services could be dispensed with altogether, now that the library had been built up and catalogued. Smith owed his appointment to the patronage of the previous O’Shanassy government, anyway. Smith’s position was abolished in February 1869 and he returned to journalism with the *Argus* group, later editing *The Australasian*. Robertson may have been the bookseller George Robertson who had published Gordon’s *Sea-Spray and Smoke Drift*. Irving was Martin Howy Irving, born in London in 1831, educated at Balliol college, Oxford, and in 1856 appointed the first professor of Greek and Latin at the University of Melbourne. He later became headmaster of Wesley College and Hawthorn Grammar school. His father was a major figure of the Catholic Apostolic Church. Blackmore, like Irving, was a rowing enthusiast, and was an original member of the South Australian Regatta committee and chairman of the South Australian Rowing Club in the 1880s.



Clarke’s Peripatetic Philosopher piece offered an account of what the Golgotha members did *not* do. But what exactly did they do at the Yorick? Once a month the club held a solemn beefsteak supper, for which the members subscribed half a crown, Hutton records. He describes them as a Bohemian crew, much given to coarse practical joking.

Carrington and Watterson’s history of the Yorick recalls: ‘Adam Lindsay Gordon was as much a ringleader as anybody else. When he played, he played hard.’ Clarke, it remarks ‘was always ready for mischief night and day.’ Alfred Telo, Clarke’s former flat-mate, is described as ‘one of the most outrageous of the practical jokers’.

It seems they were all equally involved. Telo had brought back from an expedition to New Caledonia ‘an enormous assortment of clubs, bows and savage weapons of war’, Clarke recalled in *The Leader*, 11 October 1879. According to Elliott ‘one night the comrades went out with these to lift from their hooks all the gilded hats which Melbourne hatters used to hang out as signs.’

On one occasion they harassed their fellow member J. E. Neild. Neild, born in Doncaster in 1824, had emigrated to Melbourne in 1853. A medical doctor, he wrote for *The Age* and the *Examiner* and became *The Australasian*’s first drama critic using the pseudonym Jacques, after Shakespeare’s melancholy character in *As You Like It*. He named his house, nearby at 166 Collins Street East, New Place, after Shakespeare’s birthplace in Stratford-upon-Avon. Not that there is anything wrong in finding literary names for houses. Adam Lindsay Gordon’s South Australian house by the sea was called Dingley Dell, after the house where Mr Pickwick and Mr Wardle spend Christmas in *The Pickwick Papers*. Shillinglaw’s name-plate declared Dumbiedykes, according to George Gordon McCrae’s memoir of him.

Elliott records that Telo removed the brass knocker from the front door of New Place to add to the collection he kept and Neild denounced the jokers in a letter to *The Argus*: “‘Idiots who could find nothing better to do than to wrench off citizens’ knockers” – only to find, on the following morning, that his house had been visited afresh and ornamented with a fishing rod and a gilt fish, a pawnbroker’s sign, and an undertaker’s board.’ The incident may have been provoked by Neild’s less than enthusiastic review in *The Australasian*, 28 November 1868, of Telo’s play *Christine Johnson*, which ran for two performances.

Stealing door knockers was a well established practice. William Thackeray wrote in *The Book of Snobs* (1848) of ‘a nobleman of jovial turn’ with ‘a fancy for wrenching off knockers, frequenting gin-shops, and half murdering policemen’. Clarke’s attitude to this sort of practical joking seems at least ambivalent. In ‘Arcades Ambo’, *Australasian*, 26 February 1870, he has the modern, second-generation squatter, Dudley Smooth, describe his pranks on a Melbourne visit: ‘Such a lark! Stole two boots and a brass hat. Hung a notice of a *bal masqué* on the railing of a Baptist chapel, and stuck a board with “Mangling done here” on the Hospital gate.’ Clarke remarks: ‘Ho, for the breakage of lamps, the carrying away of signs, the petty larceny of gilt hats and wooden boots!’

Carrington and Watterson’s history adds: ‘Of course, the frivolities of 1868–69 were carried on by and known only to a limited coterie: the majority of Yorick members were staid and orderly men, who would not have sanctioned practical joking had they been aware that the club was made a centre for the hatching of little plots against the public peace.’

Hutton suggests that the antics were a relic of the Gold rush years, but they pre-date that. From the early 1840s there were complaints about young squatters, often members of the Melbourne Club, getting drunk, assaulting constables, breaking windows, stealing signs and sawing through verandah posts. The behaviour is characteristic of upper-middle class young Englishmen from public schools. Clarke, Gordon, Haddon, Walstab, Whitworth, Shillinglaw, Turner, Carrington, Kane, all came from England, the majority of them from public – i.e., private – schools. In contrast, Henry Kendall, the native-born poet, seems to have had little formal education at all.

Having worked as a wage-slave, he looked upon these young men with a clear if chill eye. He spotted their class basis, rooted in the English public school system, sharply enough in his 1871 memoir of the Yorick, 'A Colonial Literary Club': 'One leading spirit of the institution was a doctor's son whose qualification was that he knew a gentleman who had a brother, who during the Rev. Charles Kingsley's schooldays had acted as a "fag" to that genius.'

Carrington and Watterson recall: 'A powerful little figure of a man was Gordon, with deep-set eyes, long neck and square shoulders. He never wore any braces, but just strapped up his pants and stuck both hands in the straps. Once in an access of jovial feelings he pitched Marcus up to the ceiling and caught him coming down.' At six foot three inches Gordon was hardly little, though he may have been thin.

Most other recollections stress Gordon's gloom rather than joviality. Henry Gyles Turner recalled in Humphris and Sladen: 'When I was treasurer of the Yorick Club, I used to see Gordon there occasionally in the late 'sixties, about a couple of years before his death. Rather a reticent and downcast-looking man, whose manner did not invite familiarity, though he could brighten up when he got on horsey topics and the glass went round. Like many of the original members of that club you had to "make a night of it" if you wanted to get the best out of them. All I can say for him is that he was not quite so depressing as poor Kendall, and despite his grievous lack of pence he occasionally let himself go.'

Frank Maldon Robb records that James Moloney, the solicitor brother of Clarke's friend Dr Patrick Moloney, similarly recalled an uncommunicative Gordon: 'He was really a very uninteresting man. He had no small talk, and except for the fluency with which he could quote Latin verses, seldom or never contributed much to social gatherings. There was in him, too, something that can only be designated "snobbishness." In Australia, "the hot sun" of prosperity "never brought the adder forth," but one could easily realize that, "English of the English" as he was, he at heart was imbued with exclusive, aristocratic, and anti-social ideas.'

What Moloney diagnoses as snobbishness might now be diagnosed as the lack of social skills characteristic of Asperger's syndrome, evidenced in Gordon's phenomenal memory.

Gordon's friend George Riddoch told Humphris and Sladen the opposite to Turner about Gordon's conversation: 'Gordon was not fond of talking horse; the only thing he cared to talk about much was poetry. He had not a wide range of conversation. Sometimes he would discuss ordinary matters; at other times he got right away into dreamland. He never showed any brisk cheeriness; he was naturally reticent and depressed.' Tenison Woods agrees: 'I think I may say that for five years I was the only intimate friend he had in the bush, but I never could get him to shake off that shyness and reserve which kept him locked up as it were within himself. Readers of his poetry will not fail to remark that sad tone of disappointment which runs through many of his pieces. There was little or none of this in his conversation. In fact, unless on the subject of poetry, he did not speak much at all. Though passionately fond of horses, and thrown amongst "horsey" people, he never talked about them except to make a necessary remark.'



Gordon was writing. John Adams in 'The Powers that Be' cites correspondence from Mrs Lewis to the Mayor of Malvern, 13 September 1929, referring to Mrs Robert Power's recalling of her time at Myrnong that 'a frequent guest in her home (when she and her husband owned all this land) was Adam Lindsay Gordon, the poet, and that he wrote several of his poems here sitting under the trees'. According to Sutherland in Turner and Sutherland, it was while staying with the Powers in 1868 that Gordon wrote 'A Song of Autumn': 'The poet was always fond, in a shy sort of way, of children, and the young folks in the house found in him an ever-ready playmate. A little girl of Mr Power's, then aged five years, was a close companion of his, and could be seen at odd times of the day seated on the tall man's shoulder, carried around the garden, while grave converse was held betwixt them. One balmy afternoon in these lengthening spring days, as they sat together on a seat beneath a tree, the little girl asked him to gather her a bunch of flowers, and began to moralize in childish fashion about the poor blossoms that die when you pluck them; but then they die too if you don't pluck them, for the scorching weather comes and the flowers pass away. Hereupon the poet fell into a train of meditation, and, while the child played round about, he wrote on a scrap of paper the mournful lyric he called "A Song of Autumn."'

'Where shall we go for our garlands glad
 'At the falling of the year,
 'When the burnt-up banks are yellow and sad,
 'When the boughs are yellow and sere?
 'Where are the old ones that once we had,
 'And when are the new ones near?
 'What shall we do for our garlands glad
 'At the falling of the year?'

October and November are autumnal back in England, but in Melbourne they are the months of spring. Of course there is no reason why Gordon should not write of autumn in spring: indeed, he may have felt as T. S. Eliot later wrote that the spring months were the cruellest, and have seen in youth and promise the inevitability of death. 'Yellow and sere' might suggest he was thinking of a northern hemisphere autumn, but the 'burnt-up banks' are Australian enough. Arthur Patchett Martin remarked in *The Beginnings of an Australian Literature*: 'the poet seems to be, if I may say so, in England and in Australia at the same time.' Perhaps Gordon was conflating not just spring and autumn, but the two hemispheres. Certainly, in answering the child with her life before her, he had in mind his own mortality and imminent death.

'You may gather again, my dear –
 'But *I* go where the last year's lost leaves go
 'At the falling of the year.'

He may also have reflected on the death of his own daughter six months earlier. Intimations of mortality had often been the note of his poetry. They were not diminishing.

Maud Power, the five-year-old girl for whom the poem was written, later married the captain of the English cricket eleven, Archibald Campbell Maclaren, Lorraine Day notes.

Jane Bridges, with whom Gordon had been in love in Worcester, recalled in Humphris and Sladen: 'Sir Edward Elgar's mother is a friend of mine, and I have often told her how I knew Lindsay Gordon when I was a schoolgirl of seventeen. I like the "Song of Autumn" so much, and Sir Edward set it to music and it was performed at one of the Festival Concerts.' Elgar set it to music in 1892, and in 1899 set Gordon's 'The Swimmer' as one of his 'Sea Pictures'. There is another setting of 'A Song of Autumn' by Percy Grainger. Gordon's poetry attracted a number of composers. *The Argus*, 7 October 1919, reported an 'Adam Lindsay Gordon Night': 'Mr W. R. Furlong sang to music of his own composition two poems of Gordon's, "Dearest, are you watching yet?" and "Uphold the Sports of Your Land." The items were enthusiastically received. Altogether Mr Furlong has set to music some thirty of Gordon's works.' Others who have set Gordon to music include Bernhard Wendlandt, Fred Packer, Matthew Hindson, Paul Stanhope, Miriam Hyde, John Ashe and George Selwyn English.

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Maggie was still away. Gordon wrote to John Riddoch, 25 November, 'I do not know where Mrs Gordon is now – she may be in Adelaide or in Robe or she may be in the steamer between those two places or possibly she may be coming here. I think I shall stop here until the first week in December is over, I am training Major Baker's horse for the Ballarat steeplechase. I think he will have a good show. R. Power has three horses in work now counting Baker's and I superintend the stables and do one horse myself ... If Mrs Gordon does not come here I think I will go round to your brother's place in the Yatiara and get him to find me something to do till you come out, that is if you are coming soon. I will just run down to Robe first to see my wife and then start for the scrub. I do not much like Melbourne though I like it better than Ballarat but I must find something now.'

There are excerpts from other undated letters to Riddoch published in *The Advertiser*, 19 August 1895: 'I am rather a good groom when I choose to work, which is not always. I am much better than I was; having some occupation is a great thing, and I write for *The Australasian* in my spare time, though I have not finished a single article yet. I am not fit for much study yet, though I take lots of exercise, walking several miles before breakfast alongside of the horses, and swimming in the Yarra.'

'I am awfully sick of the life I have been leading, and the society that I have not been able to escape from. I can assure you that my chief reason for making that rash venture in West Australia was a desire to escape from all my sporting associates, and begin a new life in the bush. Still I have done no worse than I should have done if I had kept away from here, and killed myself with running after lost sheep, and nursing doomed ones, in West Australia.'

'You do not understand much about these things, but you would hardly be stupid enough to do what I did – *enter a horse to be sold for £30 and ride him 7 lb. overweight*. I got rather a nasty fall last Saturday riding a hack of Power's that he had lent to Lieutenant Simons for a small steeplechase not worth winning. This was *not* my fault. I did not want to ride the brute at all, but

did not like to refuse. Major Baker said it was a shame to make me ride a horse that couldn't u, but R. Power said – "Oh, he won't fall with Gordon, and if he wins I shall be able to sell the brute." Simons road the same horse in a hurdle race, and he fell at the first hurdle, and again at the second, and kicked Simons and left him for dead.'

Cuthbert Fetherstonhaugh in his reminiscences *After Many Days* recalls a story about Gordon from this time: 'Once when staying with Bob Power, Gordon told his host that he had started off swimming from near Brighton into the bay fully determined not to return. He swam and swam till probably the exercise and the bracing salt water divested him of his morbid wish to die, and when almost tired out, and a long way from shore, he turned and exerted every nerve to preserve the life he had a few minutes before decided to throw away. He said he just managed to reach the beach, quite spent and exhausted, but himself again.'

The Age, 5 November 1932, published a letter from John E. Sims, 'Reminders of A. L. Gordon': 'I was a teacher in Brighton Park school from 1866 to 1871. During that time, in the Christmas holidays of 1867 and 1868, races were held on an open moor just past the Brighton Beach station. Among the spectators was Gordon, mounted on a beautiful horse. I saw him ride up to a high picket fence, looking over it to examine the ground. He then retired a short distance, turned, and putting the horse to a gallop, cleared the fence. Now the fence was about six feet high, and made of pointed hardwood, 6 x 1. Had the horse failed to clear the fence the sharp pickets would have been sure to have caused injury to horse or rider.'



Gordon now contributed a couple of poems to Clarke's *Colonial Monthly*, the only two poems he published in 1868. First was his translation of 'The Three Friends (from the French of Alfred de Musset)' in the November issue. Three friends fall in love with the same woman and as a result all die, one in a duel, one by poison, one by suicide. The woman survives. In the December issue appeared his 'Doubtful Dreams.'

But the young dreams surely have faded!
 Young dreams! – old dreams of young days –
 Shall the new dream vex us as they did?
 Or as things worth censure or praise?
 Real toil is ours, real trouble,
 Dim dreams of pleasure and pride;
 Let the dreams disperse like a bubble,
 So the toil like a dream subside.

Also in the December issue was an essay 'Australian literature no. 1'. It was unsigned, like many of the contributions. Possibly Clarke himself wrote it. Whoever it was singled out Gordon for especial notice: 'Putting aside Kendall, perhaps the most Australian of our literary aspirants is the author of *Sea Spray and Smoke Drift* and *Ashtaroth* and other spirited effusions, essentially more romantic than classic. In no land but ours could such be written. You hear the crash of the

boughs as he gallops through the scrub, you inhale “God’s glorious oxygen,” you lose sight of the city, and face to face with Nature in her racy reality “can’t catch words, and pity those who can.” The spirit of everything he reads seems to pass into him, and though we sometimes can guess his favourite authors, we never see the servile imitator or literary pirate. It is this genuine unconscious literary tone that is the chief charm of Mr Gordon ... We hope to see more of him, his merit must be acknowledged everywhere, and he is specifically ours. So vigorous, so fresh, and so enthusiastic a worshipper of Nature cannot but improve, and we look forward with some pride and much hope to the day when it will be a boast to have discovered his genius in 1868.’

But though Gordon had now begun to contribute to the *Colonial Monthly*, nothing of his appeared there again until January 1870, over a year later, when ‘The Sick Stockrider’ was published. Possibly payment from Clarke’s unprofitable journal was not as good as from *The Australasian*. But Gordon published only one poem in *The Australasian* in the course of 1869, ‘How We Beat the Favourite’. He was writing the poems that appeared in his last collection, *Bush Ballads and Galloping Rhymes*, though none of them appeared in the journals until 1870.



At some point Gordon left the Powers’ house at Toorak and went to stay with Major Thomas Durand Baker of the 14th Regiment at the barracks on St Kilda Road. It was a milieu for which education at Woolwich had originally intended him. Melbourne had been the headquarters of the British Army in Australia since 1854. In 1859, Michael Cannon notes in *Melbourne After the Gold Rush*, 168 acres bordered by St Kilda Road and City Road had been allocated for a barracks, and the first building had been completed in 1861. Gordon occupied himself there with training Baker’s horse Babbler for the Ballarat steeplechases, and boxing. The Adjutant, Lieutenant Woodlands, was another friend of Gordon’s. One of the officers drew a sketch of Gordon on Cadger. George Riddoch recalled: ‘Gordon wanted the caricature and was afraid that the officers would not let him have it, so he lay down with it on the floor and then suddenly rolled himself out of the door and bolted. He gave it to John Riddoch, who had it lithographed because Gordon was so delighted with it.’ Humphris and Sladen reproduced it as the frontispiece to their volume.

At the end of the November, Maggie returned from South Australia. She had been away two months.

‘I got a second telegram from you that Mrs Gordon was coming here on the *Penola*,’ Gordon wrote to John Riddoch, 28 November: ‘Before I finish this letter I shall most likely have seen her. I hope you got my last letter which I sent overland stupidly missing the steamer. Your last letter dated the 24 November reached me enclosing an English letter of which more anon. I dare say Mrs Gordon is right in coming round, I should be glad to see her and I now think her plans are for the best. I have been staying at Toorak as I told you with R. Power, but I have taken a quiet lodging at North Brighton since I heard from you of Mrs G’s departure for Melbourne and there she and I can stay for a week or two till things are more settled.’

And indeed by the time he finished the letter he had seen his wife. He concludes it: 'Mrs Gordon came by the *Penola*. I was hanging about the Queen's wharf all the afternoon and I could get no certain intelligence from Price Summers and Co. to the hour of her arrival. I did not even know where she would stay first. I went down to Sandridge and back to the wharf but Mrs Gordon came and missed me, the steamer stopping at Williamstown. I found her eventually at Scott's where she had stayed one night before going away to Robe that last time.'

The English letter he mentions gave further details of the Esslemont claim which he had now decided to pursue.

Saturday 5 December, the third day of the Ballarat Spring Meeting, Gordon entered the Handicap Steeplechase on Major Baker's Babbler. He had written to Riddoch 17 November: 'I think I will ride Babbler at Ballarat. Major Baker again offered to go me halves in the stakes, and pay the expenses if I would ride Babbler. The stakes are only £200, but that will be £100 to me if I win. Babbler is a good, lasting brute, and a very safe jumper. The four-mile course still suits him.'

He won. Peeping Tom wrote in *The Australasian* 21 November 1868: 'Owing a good deal to Mr Gordon's being on Major Baker's horse he was made a "Great Pot." He was ridden very patiently throughout, and the horse still had plenty in him when he finished.'

12 December Gordon wrote to John Riddoch's brother George: 'Your letter dated 26 November reached me only a few days ago. There is nothing I should like better than to spend a few weeks with you, and I should certainly have been at your place or on the road that way before this if I had not been detained by one or two things, in the first place, my wife came round by the *Penola* about a fortnight ago, and we are staying in some quiet lodgings in North Brighton, but I shall be able to get away shortly, and I shall certainly come your way – I have been tolerably busy lately, that is, I have been working *hard* by fits and starts and then taking a lazy spell for a few days – I have not been very strong, but am ever so much better than I was some months ago – I have written to your brother and am expecting an answer from him. When I come to South Australia I think I shall ride, as I have one horse left that I do not care to part with here. I think she would suit your brother well if he wants a weight-carrying hack, well bred and fast – I will write again in a few days and will let you know when you may expect me – I was thinking of coming to see you some time ago and before you had any idea of inviting me. I suppose you do not feel dull up there in the scrub, having so much to employ your time – I would write at more length but I have nothing to say beyond accepting your invitation and thanking you for it – I do not know now while I write whether your brother is still in Adelaide or whether he has left for Yallum – Mrs Gordon is well and sends you her kind regards.'



The most distinguished literary man in Australia up till now was, at least in his own eyes, Richard Henry Horne, who had come to Australia in pursuit of gold in 1852. Back in England, twenty years before emigrating, he had first attracted notice with his account of the impediments to

literary success, *The Exposition of the False Medium and Barriers Excluding Men of Genius from the Public*, dedicated to Edward Bulwer Lytton. He had corresponded with Elizabeth Barrett and collaborated on a book with her. He had worked with Dickens on *Household Words*, and known G. A. Sala and Douglas Jerrold – two of the inspirations for Clarke’s journalism. He had known Gavan Duffy in Ireland and Charles Whitehead in London, both of whom he re-encountered in Melbourne. He had published his epic poem *Orion* to sell for a farthing, achieving immense publicity. Edgar Allan Poe reviewed it saying it was ‘one of the noblest, if not the very noblest poetical works of the age’. But that was a quarter of a century earlier. His career had not prospered and his marriage was unhappy.

Horne left his wife behind in England. In Melbourne he entered into a couple of relationships by which he had two children, both dying in infancy. His career did not prosper. He didn’t find gold, but he served in the gold escort of the Mounted Police, in which role Clarke later described him in an episode of the serial of *His Natural Life* in the *Australian Journal*, January 1872: ‘Our captain seemed no less wild. He was dressed in an old frock-coat, high mud-boots, and a slouched hat. He wore his hair in long curls, sported a most elegant and curly moustache, which hung down in the most picturesque manner; carried a revolver in his belt, and pistols in his holsters; and rode habitually at full gallop. Who do you think he was? No less a person than the poet and author, Horsa Hengist – You remember Edgar Poe’s review of his book?’

In her biography *The Farthing Poet*, Ann Blainey documents how Horne also acted as a magistrate, stood for parliament unsuccessfully a couple of times, and, thanks to Charles Gavan Duffy’s support, from 1857 TO 1859 was Commissioner for Water and Sewerage at a salary of £400 a year. When that position was abolished, he established the first vineyard in Tabilk in 1860.

Macarthur had introduced grape vines to Australia in 1816. Cultivation had developed slowly in Victoria. Clarke’s *History* records some statistics and singles out Horne: ‘In 1856 there were only 279 acres under the vine in Victoria, from which 11,000 gallons of wine and 340 gallons of brandy were obtained. In 1860 there were 1,138 acres, which five years later, in 1865, had increased nearly four-fold, viz., to 4,078 acres, on which 8,199,618 vines had been planted, producing 176,959 gallons of wine, and 795 gallons of brandy, as well as 18,063 hundredweight of grapes sold as fruit. It is worthy of remembrance, as a fact, in the early history of this important colonial product, that the well-known poet, R. H. Horne, planted with his own hand the greater part of the vine cuttings at Tabilk vineyard on the Goulburn.’

Sometime in late 1867, Ann Blainey notes, Horne gave himself a further Christian name, Hengist. Around the same time Henry Kendall gave himself the extra name of Clarence. Horne claimed he acted in gratitude to a Mr Hengist who had saved his life. He was for a while called Richard Henry Hengist Horne, but eventually dropped the Henry. A somewhat sadly ridiculous figure, he was now in his mid-sixties, short, tubby, bald-headed with flowing ringlets, and with a propensity to play the guitar which he had learned while serving in the Mexican navy. James Smith recalled in ‘Recollections of an Octogenarian – 7. Talent in Exile’, *Leader*, 10 August 1907: ‘He was a singular compound of genius and vanity, priding himself more on his supposed

likeness to Shakespeare, or his physical agility and athletic achievement, and on his singing Spanish songs to the accompaniment of a guitar, than upon his numerous intellectual endowments. I remember, upon the occasion of our first meeting, how I endeavoured to draw him into conversations with respect to the Brownings and the other famous people with whom he had been intimate in England, and how his talk invariably worked round to himself.’

From June 1863 to the end of December 1868 Horne was registrar of mines in what he described as ‘The Siberia of the gold fields’, in the Blue Mountains, sixty miles north west of Melbourne. Charles Dickens published his poem ‘The Blue Mountain Exile’ in *All the Year Round*, October 1865:

From his hut he strays forth, to gaze on the night
The old starry story, with mists round the dome,
And below, ‘tis a squalid and desolate sight,
A hideous monotony – mud gleams and gloom ...

While stationed in the Blue Mountains he continued to rent a cottage in Robe Street, St Kilda, where he spent increasing amounts of time. Hugh McCrae tells in *My Father and My Father’s Friends* how his father visiting Horne one evening watched him revolving round a horizontal bar for some fifteen minutes ‘like a couple of Kilkenny cats.’ Concerned with keeping fit, Horne swam regularly in Captain Kenny’s bathing ship.

Ann Blainey writes that from mid-1867 through 1868 Horne had been trying to raise sufficient subscriptions to publish a narrative poem, *John Ferncliff*. It would be about his experiences in Australia, the prospectus announced: ‘Not only in Melbourne, Ballarat, Castlemaine and the great cities of our present civilization, but also in the wilds and scenery of the bush, among remote goldfields, and isolated settlers, and among the aborigines in the primeval forest.’ Henry Dwight, the bookseller, was to publish it, and George Gordon McCrae to provide the illustrations. But it failed to attract sufficient subscribers, and only the prospectus ever appeared.

After seventeen years in Australia Horne was now preparing to return to England. Walter Montgomery gave a dinner for him at the St Kilda Hotel with ‘all sorts of unexpected honours’. Horne got very drunk and sang and played with, he admitted to his friends, less than his usual perfection.

Horne is the probable author of a series of articles that now appeared in *The Australasian*, ‘The Dregs of the Cup’ and ‘An Unsentimental Journey’, between December 1868 and April 1869. They were under the authorship of the Hermit, who, like Horne, announced his imminent return to England.

In the course of the essays, the Hermit takes issue with Clarke, ‘that bright particular star of the evening (and of all the night long), Marcellus Clodius, Esq’: ‘The young gentleman can be amusing when he likes, in spite of his boyish blaséism, and is decidedly clever ... quotes scripture and Voltaire with equal facility ... the type of young literary Australia [who would] glory in breaking a lance on a venerable bishop ... Plato and Paul de Kock are alike serviceable to him ... he has Musset, Guizot, Balzac, and Béranger at his fingers’ ends. With a fatal fluency of pen, with a memory that supplies the place of profound research, with an aptness for spying the joints

in an adversary's harness, and a wonderful quickness in taking advantage of the same, and with a real talent for seizing on the ludicrous side of everyone and everything ... it is not surprising that he is usually successful in his raids, and as he is strong he is not merciful ... a taste for light literature and a facility for misquotation ...'

The Hermit writes as if he might have been the victim of one of Clarke's raids on the ludicrous. Horne had certainly been mocked in Clarke's Peripatetic Philosopher column in *The Australasian*; 18 April 1868, writing of Laurence Sterne, Clarke had remarked: 'You will not find his name in *Men of the Time*, simply because he is dead. Neither, by the way, will you find that of Renan, author of the *Vie de Jésus*, but you can read all about Shakespeare's antipodes Mr Richard Henry Hengist Horne there.' *Men of the Time in Australia: Victorian Series*, was edited by Henry Morin Humphreys, a former captain in the Cape Mounted Rifles and a foundation member of the Yorick.

In his biography of Horne, *Always Morning*, Cyril Pearl tells how Horne had resurrected a piece he had published thirty years earlier, *Shylock in 1868*, for Walter Montgomery to deliver at one of the entertainments provided for the visiting Duke of Edinburgh. Clarke had attacked the 'feeble candle-glow of Mr Horne's intellect' and regretted that Montgomery 'should have lent himself to the gratification of such egregious vanity and the exhibition of such lamentable bad taste'. Horne had responded in *The Argus* advising Clarke 'to learn good manners, particularly when he is addressing gentlemen and scholars'.

Gordon has also been suggested as the author of the Hermit articles, but they are not the sort of thing Gordon wrote. Kendall, after being similarly mocked by Clarke, offered a somewhat similar assessment of Clarke a couple of years later. But at this stage Kendall was yet to arrive in Melbourne, and yet to have met Clarke.



9 January 1869 *The Argus* reported: 'Mr W. H. Williams has just published a pretty little *Australian Annual*, containing short tales and poems by some of our best known writers, together with a collection of conundrums, jokes, &c. The matter seems to have been got together, to some extent, by the offer of premiums for the best contribution sent in, and the prize in poesy has been awarded to Mr Henry Kendall, for a little poem entitled "A Death in the Bush," of which it is only necessary to say that it sustains his well-earned reputation.'

The prize poem, judged by Horne, was published in the inaugural number of *Williams's Illustrated Australian Annual for Christmas and the New Year, 1868-9*. W. H. Wilde in his study *Henry Kendall* established the publishing history of the poem, which first appeared as 'A Death Scene in the Bush': 'This long narrative was published originally in *The Empire*, August 24, 1860, then an enlarged and quite changed version appeared on April 15, 1865 in the *The Sydney Mail* under the title "Orara - A Tale." Finally, as "A Death in the Bush," with some 100 lines excised from the *Sydney Mail* poem, it won a prize offered at the end of 1868 by *Williams's Illustrated Australian Annual* for an Australian poem.'

Horne commented in his report: 'Being in utter ignorance as to the real names of any of the competitors, I nevertheless venture to declare that, in awarding the prize to "Arakoon," I sincerely believe that the rest of the competitors would, could they see all the poems, coincide with my selection. Several of our best colonial writers may not have entered the lists; but, whatever the merits some of the other competitive poems possess, there is just this difference – with two or three marked exceptions, viz., they come under the denomination of good "occasional poems," written by amateurs; while "Arakoon" is evidently one who has made poetry and the poetic art, both in reading and in writing, the ruling passions of his life. Such poems as "A Death in the Bush" are produced by no other means, and by no other men; never have been, and never will be. Want of time and space precludes all analysis in justification of my award; yet I do not hesitate to offer a synthetical view of the three poems sent in by "Arakoon." I consider them as poems worthy of comparison with some of the finest parts of Wordsworth's *The Excursion*. "Arakoon" here and there displays the influence of one, indeed of two, other modern poets: but he is no imitator, and copies directly and closely from nature by striking generalities, and without any petty and prolix details.'

The third line of 'A Death in the Bush' reads 'Dry flaws wherein had crept and nestled rot'. It is from Horne's *Orion*. Horne was clearly not offended by this blatant piece of borrowing. He may well have been pleasurably flattered to have been a modern poet of influence. He awarded the poem the prize.

Ackland's biography quotes from a letter of George Gordon McCrae, 10 March 1927: 'After the competition was over, it occurred to me to read the "Death in the Bush" over again. When I got as far as the third line, I said to myself, "Kendall! What was you dreaming about when you wrote that third line? You believed it yours from frequent repetition, but man alive! It is Horne!" Then I turned up my *Orion* and found the *same word for word and letter for letter*... Then how Horne came to pass over that third line in the "Death in the Bush" before delivering his judgment *without recognition*, is quite beyond my comprehension. I was not cruel enough to enlighten either of them as to my discovery, and now I don't believe they ever attained to the knowledge of it.'

19 January 1869 Horne wrote to Kendall: 'It gave me true, great and unmixed pleasure to learn that you were "Arakoon" whose poems I had selected as being worthy of three prizes had three been on the cards. I think that such poems could not have been predicted from the author of the juvenile volume you allude to, so far as I recollect its contents. Some of your more recent compositions which I have accidentally seen, showed me what great advances you had made: but these, being all lyrics, presented no clue or hint as to the blank verse of the poem sent for the competition ...'

Kendall was proud of his success. Years later he wrote to J. Sheridan Moore: 'Amongst the defeated competitors were Gordon, Marcus Clarke, George McCrae, F. S. Wilson, Wintle the Tasmanian geologist and a host of small university fry.' However, Agnes Hamilton-Grey says in *Singer of the Dawn* that McCrae told her he had not been an entrant, adding: 'Kendall very

deservedly won his “Kudos” and pocketed the guineas of which he stood so much in need, and which I really believe was the sole reason he went in for the competition at all.’



In October 1868 Kendall’s patron Henry Parkes had resigned and the Martin ministry fallen. Kendall’s hopes of future career advancement and improved financial circumstances in Sydney had become considerably slimmer. The Kendall family had been living at Randall Terrace, Enmore Road, Newtown. Upon their marriage Henry and Charlotte moved into furnished lodgings at the corner of O’Connell and Bent Streets in the city. But by December they were living at 3 Ida Terrace, Glebe, in a house owned by his Charlotte’s mother, who lived next door. Kendall was in debt, owing Henry Parkes £30, amongst others. He wrote to J. Sheridan Moore, 28 December: ‘As a characteristic sequel to her family history, my mother is on the spree.’ Frederick Kendall in *Henry Kendall: His Later Years* quotes a letter Kendall wrote to Henry Halloran, 6 July 1879: ‘Just now I am in very low spirits. I dare say you have heard of my mother – poor thing – *for the last 30 years* she has been a confirmed dipsomaniac. During the weary time I was in the Government service I had to keep her quiet by bribing her with brandy every night. After my marriage, I tried the plan of restraint; but she became furious, and the result was that my wife couldn’t stand her and I had to leave Sydney ... she is too insane to be responsible for her actions ...’ More than once to his embarrassment she visited him, drunk, at work, Reed records in his dissertation.

Melbourne appealed. It was a bigger city, a third larger than Sydney, and there was more literary work there, or so it seemed from Sydney. Towards the end of 1867 Kendall had begun sending material to the *Colonial Monthly*, and had published half a dozen pieces there by the end of 1868. He had published some eight pieces in *The Australasian* in 1866 and 1867; in the middle of 1868 he began targeting it in earnest, and had over a dozen poems published in its pages in the second half of the year.

On 2 January 1869, Charlotte Kendall gave birth to a daughter, Lizzie (Violet) Araluen in Sydney. Henry wrote to J. Le Gay Brereton: ‘I *am* hard up and need every penny that I can honestly get. God knows how hard I struggle and how bravely Mrs Kendall assists me ... She is very delicate, but the child is strong enough. I feel sure that a change of air would be of great benefit to us both.’

Brereton, a doctor and fellow poet, offered them the loan of his cottage, Oglethorpe, in Gladesville: ‘I hope you and Mrs K. will make yourselves quite at home, and use the garden and all that is in it as if it were your own. There was something touchingly beautiful in your young wife and her babe.

‘You did right to marry, my dear fellow, whatever the Devil, in the form of worldly prudence, may be ready to hint to the contrary. Take your fill of love. Leave the Devil to his own.’

16 January 1869 *The Australasian* published a letter by George Oakley, under his pseudonym Evelyn, praising Kendall: ‘We have in Australia a poet who has passed somewhat beyond the

undeveloped or rudimentary stage assigned to him by the reviewers of the *Colonial Monthly*.’ And the January issue of the *Colonial Monthly* discussed Kendall in part two of its survey ‘Australian Literature’.



1 January 1869 Gordon rode Babbler again in the Grand National at Flemington at the Melbourne Summer Meeting, but came third to Viking, the horse he once owned, now owned by Robert Power. At the end of the race, some of the spectators surged onto the course, and held up Babbler and Ballarat. Humphris quotes a leading article from *The Australasian* about the episode: ‘It may be long ere the public will have a chance of seeing Ballarat and Babbler well handicapped finishing close together with two such riders as Johnston and Mr Gordon in the saddle.’

But winning was not the only thing. He wrote to Blackmore in Adelaide, 15 January 1869: ‘Your letter reached me and I am sorry you did not win the boat race but I conclude in a thing of that sort so long as you have a good fight for it winning is a secondary consideration. About Dan O’Connell, he is yours if you are still willing to purchase him – I have refused to sell him because he was still under offer to you and I will send him round per *Coorong* which is the best way. The *Aldinga* is not so convenient for horses and rolls about more. I do not think buying a race horse is a good thing mind you, but after all, if you do buy a horse you may as well buy a decently good one and as you do not go in for dissipations of any kind, you may be excused for gratifying a taste for horseflesh which is harmless enough.’

After discussing Dan O’Connell’s condition, he continued: ‘I should have just won the steeplechase on Babbler had it not been for the absurd mistake of the stewards. Johnston was riding for his life when he caught me and I was taking a strong pull, then I could live with him and the weight must have told in my favour for no gamer horse than old Babbler exists under punishment. Viking did not go the course, he actually missed the last fence and (so Wakefield and Dalrymple say) several others – he threw Denis in front of the stand not that he fell but he made one of those leg jumps of his. The leader of *The Australasian* was I believe copied into *The Argus* and the feeling against the stewards is very strong. I believe the race should have been declared null and void even without a protest on our part. I could not protest against Power of course nor could I well have done so Viking being entered in my name. Watson I believe was so mad that for a long while he didn’t know what he was about and the other riders came in so far behind that they were ignorant of the real facts. I have no time to write more now the steamer goes today.’



In the New Year of 1869, Gordon prepared to set out by train to Ballarat, where he had left his old white mare Fairy, and take a leisurely two hundred mile ride to stay with John Riddoch at Penola.

Some twenty years after Gordon’s stay C. D. Mackellar wrote a description of Riddoch’s property: ‘About five miles from Penola lay Yallum Park, the residence of John Riddoch, in the

midst of the many wide acres which formed but one of the properties owned by him in this district. The house was approached from the road by an entrance lodge and long drive through a deer-park, where numbers of fallow-deer grouped themselves in picturesque fashion under the trees. Well laid-out and extensive gardens and orchards surrounded the house, and a feature of these gardens was the very thick high-grown hedges, doomed at that time to destruction on account of the immense numbers of troublesome sparrows they harboured. Mr Riddoch – who was known locally as “The Squire of Penola” – had many people in his employment and paid his head gardener £200 a year. The house was a large stone mansion surrounded by balconies and verandahs and contained many spacious and well-furnished apartments; two drawing-rooms, the library, the billiard-room and Miss Riddoch’s boudoir being really fine rooms. The butler who opened the door for you might have been the family retainer of some ancient family in England. The stables, with all the farm buildings which were grouped at the back of this mansion, were quite in keeping and contained Mr Riddoch’s celebrated pedigree horses and bulls, the prices of which ran to four figures, as did the prices of his stud rams. It was in such fashion that this country magnate – an Australian squatter – lived amongst his countless herds and flocks.

‘To one side of the mansion stood the old house, a pleasant one-storeyed building surrounded by broad verandahs clothed in creeping plants; and close to it rose the gnarled old gum-tree within the branches of which Adam Lindsay Gordon sometimes took refuge, when he wanted to be alone and escape from people, and where he is suppose to have composed some of his poems. In Miss Riddoch’s album were poems written for her which have never been published. He and Mr Riddoch being colleagues in the South Australian Parliament, he was very frequently at Yallum and for long periods. In those days every Australian bush home had a cottage or building for the reception and entertainment of strangers or travellers; the hospitality being boundless.’

The Adelaide *Advertiser* recorded, 19 August 1895, in ‘Adam Lindsay Gordon. Extracts from his letters. A chat with Mr John Riddoch’: ‘Mr Riddoch often used to ride out with Gordon when the muse was upon him. “He would mumble away in the saddle with his thoughts far away, and it was absolutely impossible to get anything out of him then,” observed Mr Riddoch. “I remember when he wrote ‘The Stockrider’ at Yallum. He climbed up a gum tree near my house, as he often did when he wanted to be quiet, and composed it there. He generally went out after breakfast when he had a poetical fit and evolved his verses. Of course he was a highly educated man, notwithstanding his joining the police force and going in for horse-breaking. His eyesight was remarkably good at night, in fact he could read the smallest print by moonlight. I remember on one occasion he inscribed the Lord’s Prayer on a fourpenny bit. Of course, that was in the daytime.”’ In ‘Adam Lindsay Gordon’, in the Adelaide *Register*, 1 July 1911, John Riddoch described Gordon on his visits: ‘A moody, unsociable man when his poetic fit was on – a great smoker. Often on arriving at the house he would go away into the bush and fend for himself rather than face company inside.’

‘My husband was always a welcome guest at Yallum Park,’ Maggie recalled in *The Advertiser*, ‘and the family had many of his manuscripts. He often drew sketches or wrote poetry for the young ladies there. He used to go out in the paddocks to compose poetry.’

Sutherland speculates in Turner and Sutherland that 'How We Beat the Favourite,' 'Wolf and Hound' and 'The Ride From the Wreck' were also written at Yallum. And Robb adds: 'It was here that he wrote for Miss Riddoch's album the poem "Argemone."'

Gordon enjoyed the hospitality at Yallum, and also visited John Riddoch's brother George at Nalang. One occasion is recalled by a former fellow police trooper, George C. Scott, in *The Register*, 30 November 1912: 'Mr George Riddoch told him that there was an old friend in the sitting room. He talked, said Mr Scott, as if we had parted only the day before.'

George Riddoch recalled Gordon's visits in Humphris and Sladen: 'there was nothing about him to suggest that he had not always lived in the society to which his birth entitled him. But he had lost any dandyism he ever had about his dress; his clothes did not fit him very well and he did not wear them well. He was tall and stooped. George Riddoch described Gordon as having a thin straggling beard, bleached by the sun; brown hair, not very dark, and blue eyes.

'At night he showed no desire to sit up or to rush to bed; he simply fell in with the habits of the house. He was a very moderate eater and he seldom drank any spirits, though he smoked a good deal. Mr Riddoch never once saw him the worse for liquor.'

George Riddoch had similar recollections to his brother of riding with Gordon: 'Sometimes he was quite sociable and would talk freely and naturally on many subjects, at other times he would go off into a sort of reverie and start reciting Byron or something of the kind to himself, sometimes in a clear enough voice to be followed, but more often mumbling the poems to himself. He was always rather a monotonous reciter.'

Tenison Woods gives a similar account: 'He was remarked as being unsociable in his habits. He would prefer riding by himself, unless he would meet with a congenial companion, and when alone used to saunter along slowly, very seldom putting his horse out of a walk. I believe now that it was at these times that he was composing his poetry. He hinted this to me, but I never could get him to show me any of his compositions.'

William Trainor confirmed the 'mumbling' in an unattributed cutting in the Park Low papers, 11 November 1893, 'Memories of the Great Western. Poet and Steeplechaser. Reminiscence of Adam Lindsay Gordon. By one of his intimates': 'Oh, Gordon was, I think, the noblest fellow who ever lived. Very queer in his ways, though. I have ridden ten miles with him at a walking pace, and he didn't say a word the whole time, but went on mumbling to himself and making up rhymes in his head.' Trainor added in *The Australasian*, 27 April 1895: 'it was generally after quitting the saddle that Gordon would seize pencil and paper. He was a taciturn companion upon these rides. "I have ridden ten miles by his side at a walk," remarks Mr Trainor, "and he has never spoken a single word the whole time. But when he did rarely begin to talk his ideas flowed from him, and one forgot everything else in the pleasure of listening. Sometimes when we occupied bunks in the same small hut he would wake in the middle of the night with the talking fit on him, light his pipe, and arouse me. Then he would converse for a while, and presently go off into a dreamy mood, often, I believe, taking to his pencil and paper after I had relapsed into sleep again.'

‘Many a fragment of verse scribbled off carelessly after a ride or to kill time in the hut at night fell into the hands of Trainor,’ *The Australasian* report continued: “‘Sometimes he would give the scraps to me,” said Mr Trainor, “oftener he would just pitch them down when done, leaving me to pick them up if I chose.”“ “‘He seemed to write because he could not help it,”“ Trainor told the *Herald*, 18 April 1910.

The interview with Maggie in *The Advertiser* confirms these accounts: ‘He used to throw one leg over the saddle while he was riding, in order to rest his paper upon it, and while he was engaged in composition it was no good speaking to him. He would give no reply. At the best of times he was uncommunicative, but under such circumstances he was deaf to outside affairs.’

He described himself in his poem ‘Banker’s Dream’ in *Bell’s Life in Victoria*, 4 April 1867:

All loosely he’s striding, the amateur’s riding,
All loosely, some reverie lock’d in
Of a ‘vision in smoke,’ or a ‘wayfaring bloke,’
His poetical rubbish concocting.



Gordon left the Riddochs in mid-February 1869. 12 February Gordon came third in a race meeting at Ballarat on Maud. He wrote to John Riddoch, 15 February: ‘On Thursday night I was so tired that I could hardly walk to the telegraph-office, as you may suppose, and on Friday after the race I was not much better, though I did not feel it, having imbibed too freely. Everyone that was with me swears that I was as sober as a judge, by which I infer that everyone that was with me was as drunk as a lord. On Saturday I was very bad. The terrible reaction, consequent upon the fatigue of that awful journey, which excitement had kept off for a time, set in, and I could hardly move. I went to see a poor boy who was in the hospital, having crossed the course and been run down by me. I am glad to say that he is all right, having only broken the small bone of his leg. I gave him what money I could afford, and the stewards of the meeting promised something more. Moore also will do the same; so he is better off than he deserves, and has expressed his intention to get run down again on the earliest opportunity. A fine plucky boy he is too, the son of a miner, I believe. Of course, not the least blame is attached to me. It was in the straight running at the finish of the race and finding the mare beat I was pulling her up but only three or four lengths behind the two leaders. Several men and boys watching the first two horses and not noticing me ran between them and me. I did all I could to pull off them, and did avoid some, but knocked down two only, one of whom was hurt. Maud was beastly fat – as fat as your horse Tommy. I did not want to ride her when I saw her, but the leaps were all new and very high, and I thought the other horses would fall or refuse, as Ingleside was not expected to start. Had Ingleside been out of the race I think I could have beaten Peter Simple, and none of the others could get once round.’

Before Gordon left Yallum John Riddoch’s daughter, Lizzie, asked him to write a poem to go with a basket of flowers which was to be sent to her aunt, Mary Lord, for St Valentine’s Day. In a

postscript to his letter Gordon explained to Riddoch: 'I promised your children for Miss Lord a Valentine to be sent to your sister (so I understood them). Of course the chances were 100 to 1 against my writing them fairly and legibly while on the journey and sending them in time, as I had not the time to eat let alone to write and I started without writing material, leaving mine in your office. Yet I got a pencil and some paper and actually did scribble some verses not legibly enough to be copied by anyone but myself without errors. Still the poem was actually longer than the one I have enclosed. I should have destroyed it as a foolish way of passing the time but I have read it over and I really think it as good as anything of the kind I have ever wrote though I am no judge of my own scribbling. Read it yourself and see what you think of it. I reopened this letter to enclose it. A basket of flowers was the ornament and inscription on the Valentine they wanted to fill up.'

It has a delicate, light note, capturing a beautiful spontaneity of improvisation.

Fresh flowers in a basket -

An offering to you -

Though you did not ask it,

Unbidden I strew;

With heat and drought striving

Some blossoms still living

May render thanksgiving

For dawn and for dew.

The garlands I gather,

The rhymes I string fast,

Are hurriedly rather

Than heedlessly cast.

Yon tree's shady awning

Is short'ning, and warning,

Far spent is the morning,

And I must ride fast.

Songs empty, yet airy,

I've striven to write,

For failure, dear Mary!

Forgive me – Goodnight!

Songs and flowers may beset you,

I can only regret you,

While the soil where I met you

Recedes from my sight ...

He added a few remarks in his next letter: 'I wrote to you last Monday enclosing some verses written on the journey down. Considering the hurried way in which they were composed I think

they were tolerable, at least I showed a few stanzas to a young man here who is reckoned a good judge, and who does not flatter me as a rule, and he thought very well of them, and begged me to let him have a copy, but this of course I refused, as verses written for private friends lose their value when published. If you want a fast greyhound I have had a very well-bred one offered me for nothing. I do not care much about dogs as a rule, but this one ought to run well, from his pedigree and the performance of his sire.'

Possibly the young man was Clarke, offering to publish the verses in the *Colonial Monthly*.



The lawyer and politician George Higinbotham lived in the fashionable beach suburb of Brighton, in a single-storey cottage with a wide verandah he designed and built on ten acres of beachfront. Higinbotham may have been instrumental in arranging accommodation for the Gordons in the house of his head gardener, William Kelly. Now that Maggie was back with Gordon after visiting her father, the Gordons rented furnished rooms from Kelly and his wife at 10 Lewis Street, half a mile from the sea.

H. G. Turner wrote of Higinbotham in the *History of Victoria*: 'He was certainly the most striking figure in Victorian politics, but his convictions were urged with such a fiery intensity that even those of his followers who most admired him could not keep up the pace. He gradually fell apart from the ruck of legislators, depressed by his unrealized dream of Government by the people, brain-weary of the deplorable waste of time over trivialities, the jealous rancour between the ins and the outs; and at length it wrung from him an expression of belief that the political life was "a sort of pandemonium in which a number of lost souls are endeavouring to increase one another's torture."'

George Higinbotham was born in Dublin in 1826 and studied at Trinity College Dublin and Lincoln's Inn in London. Along with Aspinall, he had written for the *Morning Chronicle* in London. He emigrated to Victoria, was called to the bar in March 1854, and edited *The Argus* from 1856 to 1859. He had been its most liberal editor. Charles Bright recalled in *Cosmos*, 31 May 1895: 'He won the best results possible from the literary staff under his control, not so much by condemning their shortcomings as by expressing generous approval of their good work ... This mode of conducting a journal was almost the precise opposite of that usually adopted.' Bright added: 'I have rarely met any man who exhibited such uniform courtesy towards those who could be termed his inferiors in social rank ... nothing caused him such intense disgust as an assumption of superiority to the working classes on the part of those so placed as to escape the drudgery of manual labour.'

Higinbotham was member of parliament for Brighton from 1862-1871, and from 1863 to 1868 had been Attorney-General in James McCulloch's ministry. He advocated a more democratic voting system, secular state education, and unlocking the land for small settlers, famously describing the squatters as 'the wealthy lower orders'. Geoffrey Serle remarks: 'although a liberal

radical and democrat by most tests, he was often suspicious of popular causes; in the long run, however, he was to provide an unusual example of the man who becomes more radical over the years.' There is a statue of Higinbotham outside the State Treasury Building in Melbourne by Paul Montford, who created the Gordon statue in Spring Street.

Higinbotham was seven years Gordon's senior. How well they knew each other is uncertain. They both had literary interests. They were both, like Clarke, said to have married beneath them. Gwyneth Dow remarks that Higinbotham was a heavy smoker, as was Gordon. She notes too that in February 1869 Higinbotham had resigned from the McCulloch cabinet and the Executive Council, and returned to his practice as a barrister. Gordon wrote to Riddoch, 4 January 1870, that 'Higinbotham who is a barrister' gave him some advice about the Esslemont inheritance.

According to Sutherland in Turner and Sutherland, Gordon 'had become slightly acquainted with Higinbotham, who had a singularly simple and unostentatious warmth of feeling that made him readily obliging in a multitude of little ways. Out of his excellent library he lent to Gordon, through the gardener, many a work which the bookless man greatly prized. In this way Gordon greatly enlarged his reading, especially of the poets, and made much fuller acquaintance with Browning and Swinburne. Mr Kelly remembers how on a seat beneath some bushy shrubs the poet spent long hours in reading books, mostly borrowed from the barrister's library.' 'Steeped in Swinburne and bewildered with Browning,' Oscar Wilde wrote of Gordon's poems in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, 25 March 1889.

For the first time in years Gordon had ready access to books again. His own collection had in the course of his travels been reduced to no more than half a dozen battered volumes. He wrote to John Riddoch: 'I once had a decent little library. My present stock comprises a *Turf Register*, a *Victorian Ruff*, about half of a religious work which came into my hands I don't know how, a dilapidated dictionary – the odd pages of which serve as occasional pipe lights – *David, the Shepherd King* (with the author's compliments), which no one will borrow or steal, and a volume of my own verses which I can't get rid of. I am laid up today with influenza. I walked to Toorak and back on Sunday and got a chill, and yesterday I stayed too long in the sea. I can't stand swimming in the cold weather now like I used to; in fact, I'm getting such an infernal old cripple that I shan't be able to stand anything soon.'

The Victorian Ruff: or Pocket Racing Companion compiled and edited by William Levey was published at Bell's Life office annually from 1861 to 1866. William Levey, the editor of *Bell's Life*, was a personal friend of Gordon's and admirer of his poetry, Charles R. Long recalled in *The Australasian*, 21 October 1933. His brother George Collins Levey was proprietor of the Melbourne *Herald* from 1863 to 1868, and a later contributor to and sometime editor of *The Age*. Both George and William Levey, along with Gordon and Clarke, were foundation members of the Yorick Club in 1868. Another brother, J. A. Levey, was president of Melbourne Hospital. *David, the Shepherd King* by the pseudonymous Hippocampus was published by F. F. Baillièrè in 1867.

Tenison Woods recorded Gordon's reading of Byron, Marcus Clarke noted the influence of Shelley, and Robb explores the influence of them, along with Swinburne, Browning and Tennyson on Gordon's verse. Gordon refers to Swinburne's *Felise* – 'a great favourite of mine' –

in a letter to Kendall. He told Riddoch, 6 October 1868, he had sent Blackmore a copy of Swinburne's *Chastelard* the previous year, and Hutton writes that he sent for a copy of *Poems and Ballads* to lend to his doctor, James Murray, in December 1869.

Dr Murray, later notorious as the leader of the *Carl* blackbirding expedition, had already been involved in various scandalous episodes. Edward Docker records: 'he left several of his patients at Melbourne's Benevolent Asylum heavily drugged with morphia so he could enjoy the weekend without fear of interruption.' Having been a member of Howitt's expedition in search of Gordon's heroes Burke and Wills, he was made medical officer in the search for Leichhardt in 1865. When MacIntyre went on ahead Murray, left in charge, produced a hidden supply of brandy on which everyone got drunk. The horses wandered away and died of thirst. MacIntyre died of fever. Docker writes: 'It appeared that the medicine chest had been full of drugs with which the explorer could possibly have dosed himself, but not being able to read Latin, and thus not knowing which drug was which, he had used none and so had perished.'

Like Swinburne, Gordon was an enthusiastic swimmer. Richard Horne, another powerful swimmer, was later to challenge Swinburne to a swimming competition back in England when they met in 1874. In Turner and Sutherland Sutherland records of Gordon: 'Every morning, summer or winter, he walked down to the beach for his plunge into the sea; he was a powerful swimmer, and, regardless of sharks, he would head half a mile out into the bay before thinking of turning back. When remonstrated with, on one occasion, for having gone so far that he was all but spent ere he touched again a solid base, he answered that if death came without his actually seeking it, he at least would have no cause for complaint.' As he wrote in 'The Swimmer':

I would that with sleepy, soft embraces
 The sea would fold me – would find me rest
 In luminous shades of her secret places,
 In depths where her marvels are manifest;
 So the earth beneath her should not discover
 My hidden couch – nor the heaven above her –
 As a strong love shielding a weary lover,
 I would have her shield me with shining breast.

Sutherland adds: 'In the morning he exercised his horses, in the afternoon he walked into Melbourne, about eight miles, and often he walked back again. As a means of securing still more exercise, he joined the Brighton Artillery Corps, to which his landlord Kelly belonged. Not only did he enjoy the drill, but he became an enthusiast with the rifle, and spent long hours at the butts.' Gwyneth Dow notes that Higinbotham was also a member: 'He was so little concerned with status that he is alleged in the 1860s to have joined the Brighton Yeomanry as a private while his gardener was a sergeant.'

In Melbourne Gordon had his literary friends at the Yorick Club and the *Colonial Monthly*. On Saturdays there were his horsey friends at the Melbourne Hunt Club. Mrs Gordon and her husband both followed the hounds, and her favourite mount was a horse named Johnny Raw, she

recalled in *The Advertiser* interview. According to Hutton, Johnny Raw was so called because he had been singed in a fire and his coat had bald patches.

For all Gordon's attempts at recuperation by swimming and riding and walking, the series of heavy falls had taken their toll. His fits of depression and insomnia continued. His wife recalled in *The Advertiser*: 'He was well to do when we were married, but he lost money in racing. The melancholy and depression from which he suffered at the end were caused by a succession of bad falls, his baby's death, and the loss of his property. While we were at Brighton he was writing poetry every evening, and in spare moments during the day. It was always the same wherever we were.'

'Often in the night he rose several times from his bed, as some idea seized him, and strode up and down the room turning his thought into verse,' C. D. Mackellar recalls her saying on another occasion.

Asked by *The Advertiser* to say what manner of man the poet was, the widow replied, 'I didn't take much notice of his poetry,' and she confessed that she felt more interest in his horses and his riding.

The poems he was writing at Brighton he would collect in *Bush Ballads and Galloping Rhymes* the following year. The renewed program of writing suggested a renewed positive motivation. But the sentiments of the poetry expressed a mixture of fatalism and desperation. He wrote in 'De Te':

No man may shirk the allotted work
The deed to do, the death to die.

In 'Mementoes of Adam Lindsay Gordon' in *The Sydney Mail*, 26 June 1912, W. Farmer Whyte quoted from a letter from George Gordon McCrae: 'Gordon kept very much to himself, and very few knew anything about his private life. Well as I knew him, I never entered his Brighton cottage until the day after his death.'

But it was not all despair, and others seem to have entered the house on one occasion at least. Frank Maldon Robb, who was a Melbourne barrister, records an anecdote by the Melbourne solicitor James Moloney, brother of Clarke's friend Dr Patrick Moloney, about an afternoon spent with Clarke, Walter Montgomery and Gordon when they rode down to Brighton together across what was then Elwood Swamp: 'It remains for Mr Moloney an unforgettable day by virtue of two facts: first, the romantic rhetoric which poured unceasingly from the lips of Marcus Clarke on all subjects in heaven and earth and the waters under the earth, broken at frequent intervals by the declamations of Montgomery of relevant or irrelevant passages from Shakespeare; and secondly, by the contribution of Gordon to the wild symposium. Mounted on a little pony, his legs almost touching the ground, Gordon raced it at every obstacle that could be construed into a jump, and then darted back to the other three, firing off long quotations from his favourite Latin authors, the jaunt thus begun not ending till the "wee sma' 'ooors" in the poet's house at Brighton.'

W. J. Hammersley recalled another occasion when Gordon was with Montgomery: 'It was in the yard of the Hunt Club Hotel, in Little Collins Street, that I once met him with Walter Montgomery, the actor, and the latter insisted on Gordon's riding about a little pony. Gordon's

legs touched the ground, and he seemed to enjoy the joke immensely, especially as it pleased the actor.’

There were other happy, horsey times. In ‘Napoleon the Third Hotel – Emerald Hill’ in *The Wayfarer*, 16, December 2010, John Adams records some occasions. *The Argus* reported, 27 June 1892 at a ceremony at the poet’s grave: ‘Mr Whiteman recalled the days when Gordon used to visit his forge in MacKillop Street, and sit dangling his legs while he recited his verses in a peculiar sing-song which was not unpleasant and brought out the rhythm very well; and told also of many pleasant evenings spent at the Napoleon the Third Hotel in Emerald Hill, at which Gordon lived for a while.’ According to the *South Eastern Star*, 18 July 1927: ‘Both Mr Wilson and Gordon removed their racing strings to Melbourne and were jointly quartered at The Napoleon III Hotel (now the Railway Hotel), Emerald Hill, kept by a Mr Trotter. There Mr Fountain as a lad of 14, attached to the Wilson ménage, was in daily contact with Gordon whom he describes as a thoroughbred gentleman and aristocrat. Jimmy Harcourt, Billy Trainor, (the father of Gordon Trainor) and Billy Simpson, lodged at the hotel. Simpson was the Tommy Hales of his day. Trainor cultivated the acquaintance of Gordon and possessed some of his unpublished verse.’

Joseph Summers recalled another venue. At the annual pilgrimage to Gordon’s grave in 1912, the Brighton and Sandringham *Southern Cross* reported, 7 September: ‘Dr J. Summers, of Perth, mentioned that Gordon, Ryan, Horne, and himself used to assemble at the Adam and Eve Hotel, in Little Collins Street, and on one occasion Gordon clasped his arms round his (Dr Summers’) neck and said, “If you were a girl I would kiss you.” (Laughter).’ Born in Somerset in 1839, a bachelor of music from Oxford, Summers had in 1865 migrated to Melbourne, where his brother Charles was a sculptor. A well-known pianist, organist and composer, he set Horne’s *Galatea* and Kendall’s ‘Native Wren’ to music. He went bankrupt in 1872 and again in 1891 as a result of mining speculations, and in 1897 moved to Perth.



Upon his return from Yallum Gordon had begun actively exploring ways to make a living from his writing. Poetry was clearly not profitable, but there was a ready market for racing commentary in the Australian press. He made use of the contacts he had. Haddon, the editor of *The Argus*, was a member of the Yorick Club, and Gordon also knew W. J. Hammersley, *The Australasian*’s sporting editor.

Howlett-Ross writes in his *Memoir* of Gordon: ‘he was much assisted and encouraged by the good-heartedness of Mr W. J. Hammersley, who relates how Gordon refused at first to accept money for his contributions, but was ultimately induced to alter his determination, as he was in very straitened circumstances. “He in fact,” says Mr Hammersley, “told me as much, and I used to get him a cheque every now and then and slip it quietly into his hand with every regard for his feelings. For he was a very proud man, and, notwithstanding his bushman’s attire and rough exterior, there was no mistaking the gentleman ... I understood from him that his father had been

an officer in the army, that he was entitled to a considerable property at home, and that he would go to England to see after it. He once brought some law papers into my office, and referred to them as relating to the property to which he was entitled. He seemed terribly in earnest over then, and his eye, that wild eye, seemed to look into one's very soul as he conversed. At times he was the strangest, most weird, mysterious man I ever saw, and I could not help feeling almost afraid of him, and yet there was a fascination about him that made me like to see him. He was very fond of quoting the classics, too fond also of introducing Latin quotations in his prose writing, and I had to tell him once that as a rule sporting readers were more conversant with *Bell's Life* or the *Druid* than with Horace or Juvenal.”“

Gordon wrote to John Riddoch, 17 February: ‘I have seen Hammersley who tells me that Mr Evans the chief of *The Australasian* is very anxious to be introduced to me. He will, so H says, take me on the staff or pay me liberally for contributions so my silence has been better than my song. If these men will pay me fairly I could make a living here with the aid of a little traffic in horse flesh until something turned up. I would far rather shepherd a flock of your sheep for that matter but we cannot always do as we would wish. I shall see Evans some day early next week and will find out what his price is.’

In Turner and Sutherland Sutherland quotes a letter Gordon wrote around this time, February–March 1869: ‘I have at present not the least idea of what I am going to do; I have a straightforward offer from *The Australasian* to write for that paper. Perhaps I might thus make enough to live on.’

According to Sutherland the offer to Gordon from *The Australasian* was that of a sporting reporter: ‘It was a position that would have taken him to every race meeting in the country, to live in hotels, and to be thrown more than ever into the company of those who hang round racing-stables and betting-rooms. He knew that a weakness for stimulants was growing upon him, and he had to fight also against a tendency to use opiates in order to sleep at night. He distrusted himself, and refused the offer, hoping to find some means of earning a living which should be to him less perilous.’

Opiates may have been one temptation, but they were readily available anywhere. The other was that of betting and fixing races. Howlett-Ross's *Memoir* quotes John Riddoch in a speech at Mount Gambier when the foundation stone of the obelisk commemorating Gordon's famous leap was laid, 8 July 1887: ‘Gordon was necessarily thrown a great deal into the society of sporting men, many of whom were his friends; but at the same time the conviction was forced upon him that many of that class were most undesirable companions, and he was led to fear that through their influence he might be led into doing some act that his conscience and high sense of honour would not fully approve. During the last years of Gordon's life, when his popularity as a steeplechaser was at its highest, when he as a rider was backed and not the horse he rode, and when he was not in affluent circumstances, many temptations were put before him – temptations that to many similarly placed would be irresistible. But those who knew Gordon best, however, would know he was far above being tampered with, and that those who might try to tamper with him would not go unscathed away.’ And John Riddoch told *The Advertiser* in 1895: ‘He often

used to tell me at the time he was riding, and he was a scrupulously “straight” rider, how the public used to follow his mounts, and he would smile sadly as he said, “They would not be so eager to do so if they know how often I hoped for a fall.”“

Trainor recalled in *The Australasian*, 27 April 1895: ‘I do not believe that during the whole time of our acquaintance he ever had a pound upon a race. Neither did he play cards or gamble in any way. On the contrary, he often censured me for doing so.’

He continued riding. 27 March he won the VRC Steeplechase on Babbler. And he contributed to *The Australasian*, though he seems never to have been formally on the staff. He wrote to John Riddoch from North Brighton, 9 May: ‘I shall go to Ballarat next Friday if nothing happens to report for *The Australasian* as Yuille is dangerously ill and Hammersley has asked me pressing and brought pecuniary arguments to aid.’



Clarke, despite dismissal from *The Argus* staff as its theatrical correspondent, retained his interest in theatre. He was one of a number of amateur actors who appeared at the Theatre Royal in a farewell to Lambert, co-partner and manager of the Theatre Royal, retiring after forty-two years on stage. Clarke, *The Argus* reported, 28 February 1868, exhibited no inconsiderable ability.

7–12 December 1868 his first play was performed, *Foul Play*. Dealing with financial chicanery and set partly in Australia, it ran for six performances at the Duke of Edinburgh theatre, formerly the Haymarket, built by George Coppin and now renamed in honour of the royal visit. *The Argus* gave it a substantial and positive review, 8 December: ‘The dramatic adaptation of Messers Reade and Boucicault’s popular story of *Foul Play* is among the occurrences which have recently marked theatrical annals in London, and it is nothing surprising that the large interest the story has excited generally should have suggested its suitability for dramatic purposes here. The adapter, in this instance, Mr Marcus Clarke, is a gentleman whose name, though not familiar to the public, is well-known to those who are in the secret of literary disguises. Considering the many circumstances of difficulty which attend a first representation, in which the management and the company have not the advantage of the experience gained during a London success to guide them, the progress of the play last night was exceedingly smooth, and undistinguished by any of those contretemps which not seldom interrupt the course of the best written dramas ... Altogether the management is to be complimented upon the production of the piece. At the fall of the curtain there was a loud call for the principals engaged in it, after which the author was strongly invited to come forward and receive the compliments intended for him but apparently his excessive modesty prevented his responding to the call.’

Harold Love notes that J. E. Neild reviewed it favourably in *The Australasian*, 12 December, defending the plot – which had a ‘carrier duck’ carrying news of a shipwreck several hundred miles – from the charge of improbability. *The Argus*, 2 January 1869 commented that it ‘ran a week, but had not a remarkable success.’ That same day the Peripatetic Philosopher reported suffering from an attack of ‘the foul fiend dyspepsia’.

In December 1868 Marian Dunn, who had played Ophelia to Montgomery's Hamlet, took a benefit performance and retired temporarily from the stage, *The Argus* reported, 2 January 1869. Seven months later she and Clarke were married; possibly her withdrawal from the stage marked their engagement. Was there some rivalry between Clarke and Montgomery over her affections, which contributed to the rift that now developed between them?



Mackinnon records: 'Clarke supplied special articles to *The Argus*, and acted as the theatrical critic of that paper for some time, during which he wrote some admirable critiques on the late Walter Montgomery's performances – critiques which gained for him the admiration and regard of that talented actor, though unhappily they fell out afterwards, for some foolish reason or another.'

Clarke summarized Montgomery's career in the obituary he wrote of him in *The Argus*, 25 September 1871: 'Walter Montgomery was born in 1827 at New York. He was of English parentage, and was brought from the United States when still an infant. He did not adopt the name of Montgomery until after his mother's death. He was a natural son, and for some time bore his father's name, but took that of his mother, in compliance with her dying request. The circumstances of his early years were humble, and his education was limited in consequence. But he had from his childhood a strong leaning for dramatic studies, and though brought up to the occupation of a designer of shawl-patterns, his inclinations always prompted him to hope for an ultimate connexion with the stage. Long before he made acting his profession, he had distinguished himself as an amateur. He nevertheless worked hard at his business, which was steadily becoming a very profitable one to him. The desire to become an actor, however, was irresistible, and so at a time when he was earning £9 or £10 a week at shawl-pattern designing, he joined a provincial company at a salary of £2. The late Mr Charles Kean saw him in one of his provincial tours, and offered him an engagement to travel with him for three years; but Mr Montgomery preferred to map out his course for himself. He was variously occupied in the Midland and Western counties of England for several years, and eventually went to Manchester, where, at the Theatre Royal in that city, he became a great favourite. He made his first appearance in London, at the Princess's, on June 20, 1863, in the character of Othello, and by all the discerning critics of the time, was pronounced an actor greatly beyond the range of the conventional order. He subsequently appeared at Drury Lane and the Haymarket, and well maintained the good impression he had at first created.

'He came to Australia in 1867, under engagement to the management of the Theatre Royal. He was an old friend of the late Mr Charles Vincent, then one of the managerial firm, and it was principally at Mr Vincent's solicitation that he accepted the engagement. His first appearance, on Saturday, July 20, of that year, in the character of Hamlet, will not soon be forgotten, for it marks a distinct epoch in the theatrical history of this colony. The unanimity with which his acting in this and other Shakespearean parts was at once pronounced of a merit quite beyond that of any of

his predecessors, was very remarkable. During his first engagement at the Royal, extending from the date just mentioned to the 18th of October, *Hamlet* was played 13 times, the house being always good, and frequently crowded, on these occasions. The general feeling created was that a new era of the legitimate drama had begun; and it is certain that at no previous time was so much interest manifested in the poetic drama by the educated classes of Melbourne as at that period. Great numbers of persons whose prejudices against the theatre had up to that time kept them out of it, were known now to visit it regularly, and the hopes of those whose convictions led them to believe that the theatre may be made a powerful instrument of moral teaching, were greatly encouraged in consequence. Amongst some of the modes in which this interest expressed itself was a series of letters in this journal on the question, "Was Hamlet mad?" Those were afterwards collected into the form of a pamphlet, which obtained a large circulation.

'Mr Montgomery subsequently visited all the other colonies, and was received with equal favour wherever he went. In December 1867, he commenced a series of readings at St George's Hall, and for two months maintained a degree of success wholly unparalleled of its kind in this colony; and there is no question of his having done more to improve the public conception of what really is meant by elocutionary power than anyone who over essayed the task here before. His audiences were of a kind entirely different from those who usually attend such entertainments, and whatever opinion there might have been upon his merits as an actor, there was but one as to the surpassing finish of his style as a reader.'



Montgomery's self-promotional antics attracted notice, as was intended, but not always as genially as Montgomery hoped. The press mocked him for minding Molly, the Duke of Edinburgh's poodle, when the Duke returned to England. They mocked him when he rode down Collins Street on a hired horse, his feet 'stuck out at all angles', his head 'buried in the collar of the fur coat he affected'. According to the Yorick Club's history, he would sometimes stand upright on the horse's back.

Hugh McCrae recalled in *My Father and My Father's Friends* how his father witnessed Montgomery farewelling his dog at the corner of Collins and Swanston Streets. 'He described Montgomery emerging from between the folding-doors of a Hansom cab, and tenderly returning to its depths a Pomeranian puppy which he had hitherto held in his arms. The kiss he gave the dog was a Tallulah Bankhead one. George said, "I saw it; and heard it."'

As for the coat, Hugh McCrae recalls that Montgomery was inordinately proud of a bearskin coat the Duke of Edinburgh gave him and wore it even on the hottest days. He was spotted one evening in Nissen's cafe 'wrapped in his coat, appearing like a she-bear in the middle of a deep sleep.

'Stiffe shouted: "Wake up, Montie!"

'Whereupon Aspinall whispered: "S'sh! Not so much noise, Jim! It looks as if Montie might be going to – to – to – to – to give birth to a possum at any minute.'"

Hugh McCrae also recalled that Clarke was never forgiven for making a noise like a collection plate when Montgomery recited, badly, part of a Church of England ritual at Frank Madden's house.

During April and May 1869 Montgomery and Clarke were engaged in a bitter dispute in the press. 'The silly letter addressed by Mr Montgomery, the actor, to some provincial journal,' wrote Clarke in his Peripatetic Philosopher column in *The Australasian*, 10 April 1869, had provoked him to respond: 'Mr Montgomery claims bitterly that he has been unmercifully satirized by the Melbourne press. So he has. But if Mr Montgomery had not purposely made himself conspicuous he would not have been ridiculed. I am not defending the satirists. I think that most of the laughing about the dog, and the coat, and the horse, was in very bad taste; but if a gentleman will take the whole of Melbourne into his confidence and perform all sorts of silly pranks to attract attention, he cannot complain if the confidence is sometimes abused, and the attention not always favourable. I have before stated my opinion of Mr Montgomery. He did some very generous things when he was here; he is a highly-gifted actor and a pleasant companion, but, like many other men, he could not stand success, and his vanity induced him to do many silly things, of which his letter accusing the press of being open to bribery is not the least. I think that we may do Mr Montgomery the justice to allow that the praises he received were due to his talent, not his money. He seems to think otherwise, but perhaps that arises from the modest estimate he has formed of his own abilities. I can't help regretting that an actor who gave so much pleasure to so many people, and a gentleman who displayed much good feeling, albeit mixed with some folly and conceit, should have left such a very bad impression on the minds of the people of Melbourne by the publication of a silly and ill-considered letter, reflecting upon the character of the men who were his best friends. A journalist with any conscience cannot *always* praise, you know.'

21 April 1869 *The Argus* published a letter from Clarke: 'In your evening contemporary of to-day reference is made to Mr Walter Montgomery's letter to the *Ballarat Evening Post* of the 19th inst, in which that gentleman, referring to the articles anent his accusation of bribery against the Melbourne press, says, "I date a series of personal attacks in consequence of my failing to purchase or see merit in a drama with a licentious priest as its hero." Your evening contemporary says that he is informed that the drama in question was called *The Abbé's Plot*, that it was read to Mr Montgomery after the writer had heard that gentleman read *Fra Angelo*, which Walter Montgomery claimed as his; that Mr Montgomery objected to the piece on the ground that there was no female character of importance in it; that Mr Montgomery was magnanimously willing to help the author to supply this omission, and went so far as to present the author of the drama with an ornament bearing an inscription, "from his dear friend, Walter Montgomery."

'As I am the author of the piece in question, and was at the time when I wrote it employed upon *The Argus* staff, I have to request that you will allow me to contradict some inaccuracies in the paragraph which I have quoted. The piece was originally written for the late Mr Vincent, and I read it to Mr Montgomery at his own request. I certainly did not think that I was the person to whom that gentleman referred as "attacking him on account of its rejection," inasmuch as I never asked him to purchase it. It seems to me that, prompted by a desire to at once rebut an accusation

made against any journalist, your contemporary has not paused to obtain accurate information. I read the piece to Mr Montgomery before he showed me *Fra Angelo* (which he did not claim as his own, but plainly stated that it was written by an English author). His objection to the drama was, that it would offend religious prejudices, being the story of an ambitious priest (the Abbé Aramis of Dumas' *Vicomte de Bragelonne*), who, being general of the Jesuits, plots to obtain the Popedom. Mr Montgomery did not offer to help me to supply any omission; and, finally, Mr Walter Montgomery did not present me with an ornament bearing an inscription, "from his dear friend, Walter Montgomery." I was one of the first persons with whom Mr Montgomery became acquainted on his arrival in the colony, and I have met him frequently during his stay here; upon his leaving for the country districts, he gave me a gold scarf-ring, as he said, "as a remembrance" of me. I accepted it in perfect good faith, and whatever Mr Montgomery's animosity against the Melbourne press may lead him to do, I cannot believe that he would venture to insinuate that I received that gift as a "bribe" or as "blackmail" ...

'In consideration of the recent scandalous statements concerning the bribing of critics and journalists, I think it only due to the paper of which you are the editor to state that I never wrote a single critical notice of Mr Montgomery's performances for *The Argus*.

'Awaiting Mr. Montgomery's reply, I am, sir, your obedient servant, Marcus Clarke.'

5 May 1869 a further letter from Clarke was published: 'In accordance with the statement made in my last letter to your journal, I wrote to Mr Walter Montgomery, requesting him to state distinctly if I was one of the persons to whom he alluded in his recent letter to the *Ballarat Evening Post* ... To this simple request for plain-dealing, Mr. Montgomery sends me the following reply: -

'Prince of Wales Theatre, Sydney, April 27, 1869, Sir, - My last letter to the *Ballarat Evening Post* is exhaustive.

'Your obedient servant, Walter Montgomery ...

'The case, therefore stands thus, - Mr Montgomery, desirous either of keeping his name before the public, or of injuring his former acquaintances in Melbourne, writes from the secure haven of Sydney two letters to a Victorian country journal, in which he says that he knows several Melbourne journalists to be venal and open to "blackmail," but that a "wholesome dread" of the law of libel forbids him to do more than insinuate. When asked to name offenders, and challenged to make an open and honest accusation, he virtually withdraws all he said before, by admitting that he has no further proof to advance - that he has said all he could say - and "fearing to strike, but, longing still to wound," refuses to make the explanation which ordinary manliness would seem to demand.

'I think that, after this pitiful exhibition of cowardice and malice, Mr Montgomery's former acquaintances can afford to treat their present traducer with the contempt he merits.'

Montgomery's reply appeared in *The Argus*, 18 May: 'I have received a letter from Mr Marcus Clarke in which he denounces my brief acknowledgement of his last epistle as "impertinent and ungentlemanly." He calls me a "malicious coward," and rather unnecessarily cuts an acquaintance severed long since by me ...

‘I have no hesitation in saying that “I date a series of personal attacks” from Mr Clarke’s pen from the following circumstances, and I challenge him to contradict me. Details of dual scenes can only be proved by the integrity of the parties, and I will do Mr Clarke the justice to think that when I recall the circumstances he will confirm rather than refute them, and possibly (but I can hardly expect that) couple with his confirmation an expression of regret.

‘Mr Clarke told me he had overdrawn his account at the Union Bank some hundred and odd pounds. We were then in treaty touching the play he had written for the late Mr Vincent. Mr Clarke was at this time devoting himself to dramatic literature, and expressed himself rather bitterly upon my engagement at the Haymarket, as it stood in the way of his interests in the drama accepted by Mr Roberts, entitled *Foul Play*. He told me he feared that Mr Roberts would fail before he could get the money for it, and he was hard up, or to this effect. Mr Clarke read the play to me at Scott’s, and I objected entirely to the character of a Jesuit priest; and I must recall to Mr Clarke one inaccuracy in his letter to you upon that subject. I certainly did suggest an entire alteration in “the argument,” and sketched him a plot by which he could introduce a strong love interest instead of the objectionable prelate. Mr Clarke says, “Mr Montgomery did not offer to help me to supply any omission.”

‘We were in the busy height of our negotiation when we both received serious injuries whilst schooling our horses at Goyder’s. On Mr Clarke’s convalescence I returned him the play, requesting him to make the necessary alterations. To this I had no reply, and soon afterwards he joined the abusive clique who amused themselves by inventing and writing vulgar personalities anent me. Mr Clarke asks me to prove that he wrote certain things. I cannot do this, but in one or two cases and then only from his verbal admissions, he told me he was the author of remarks in *The Australasian* touching my Castlemaine trouble, and when I remonstrated with him upon the injustice of commenting upon *ex parte* statements, he defended himself in quite an angry tone. I believe he is the author of this sentence: - “Mr Walter Montgomery has succeeded in making an advertising medium of a Prince of England.”

‘I consider this an insult, and so, also, did the distinguished personage alluded to, to whom, and his suite, all these choice extracts (with marginal references) were carefully transmitted. No stone was left unturned to injure me in the esteem of that gracious gentleman; and if you care to know His Royal Highness’s opinion upon the matter, he told me my letter “was not half strong enough.” Others, however, with less knowledge of the world – absent, distant, and very dear to me – have fallen from me; and I find that now, when I am about to reap the reward resulting from a laborious life-long study of my profession, I am likely to have my wished for ease disturbed by a few censorious knaves, who would gladly hail me as a boon companion, were I to follow the example of many a better fellow before me, and sacrifice, for the doubtful gratification of their acquaintanceship, the duties I owe myself and my profession. Then my past would be a wonder! my present – a marvel! my advertisements – miracles! my future – the gutter!’

The Argus commented: ‘The above letter reached us in a printed form, and copies of it were, we believe, circulated among Mr Montgomery’s friends in Melbourne immediately after the delivery of the Sydney mail yesterday. In these circumstances it is a stretch of courtesy on our

part to publish the letter at all, and in doing so we treat Mr Montgomery with a degree of consideration which his very ungentlemanly conduct gives him no right to expect.'

Clarke wrote again, 17 May: 'Notwithstanding Mr Walter Montgomery's refusal to grant my request, and put the charges which he has hinted against the Melbourne press into some tangible shape as regards myself, I have been shown a printed handbill addressed to the "Editor of *The Argus*" (a copy of which I enclose), which has been privately circulated in Melbourne by order of Mr Montgomery. The broadsheet in question begins with an allusion to a private letter in which I told Mr Montgomery that, after his ungentlemanly conduct, I would be compelled to decline his acquaintance, and ends with some melodramatic nonsense about the Duke of Edinburgh; but in it Mr Montgomery makes a delicately-contrived misstatement, which I feel called upon to correct. He says: "Mr Clarke told me he had overdrawn his account at the Union Bank some hundred and odd pounds ..."

'The inference which Mr Montgomery wishes to be drawn from this ingeniously malicious paragraph is evidently that I was in a state of poverty, pressed by the bank for payment of an overdraft, and that I came to him with a play for sale; that at the same time I had some intention of producing *Foul Play* at the Haymarket, and feared that I should not be paid; that after this I met with an accident, and refusing on my recovery to make the alterations needed in the play Mr Montgomery refused to purchase, had pursued him with personal abuse.

'The real facts are these: - Mr Montgomery requested me to show him the piece I had written, on account of its resemblance to one in his own possession. I read it to him in the month of June, 1868. He said that it would not act, and suggested an entire alteration in the plot. I regarded this simply as friendly criticism. I never asked him to buy the piece. The insinuation about the overdraft is miserable. My account at the Union Bank was overdrawn some hundred pounds, I believe, at that time, but the overdraft was secured to the satisfaction of the bank. I never asked Mr Montgomery to give or lend me any sum of money whatever. The insinuation which Mr Montgomery would throw out seems to me the more base, because he obtained his information during a laughing conversation which took place when he was a guest at my own dinner-table. *Foul Play* was not even written at the time of my interview with Mr Montgomery at Scott's, viz. June, 1868. It was written, to the best of my recollection, about November, and was produced at the Haymarket Theatre in December. Mr Montgomery says that "he dates a series of personal attacks" from his refusal of *The Abbé's Plot* in June. Perhaps he does; he was, however, on very friendly terms with me in August, September, October, November, and December, even dining with me at my private residence during that time. How is it he did not show his anger before? Moreover, the personal attack he mentions must have been made (if made at all) in January, for it refers to his Castlemaine escapade, which took place in January.

'There is no need for me to use any of the abusive epithets with which Mr Montgomery now delights to revile me. The coarse language he has used to me and all his petty anger I can readily forgive: but I think that, in refusing me the explanation I requested, because he believed that I had commented upon the follies of which all Melbourne was talking, and in then basely twisting

information obtained at a private house into an injurious accusation against his entertainer, Mr Montgomery has acted in a manner which renders him unfit for the society of gentlemen.’

24 May 1869 *The Argus* reported: ‘We have received a telegram from Mr Montgomery, dated Sydney, May 22, informing us “on his sacred oath,” that Mr Marcus Clarke told him of his overdraft at the door of the Union Bank in Collins Street. This is, of course, in contradiction of Mr Clarke’s statement that he mentioned the fact to Mr Montgomery during a laughing conversation at his own dinner table.’

26 May 1869 another letter appeared from Clarke: ‘I see by your issue of Monday last that Mr Montgomery has chosen to state that he obtained his information concerning my banking account at the door of the Union Bank, in Collins Street, instead of at my private residence. It is impossible for me to prove this assertion to be false. I can only repeat my former statement – “that I told, Mr Montgomery that my account at the bank was overdrawn when he was a guest at my own dinner table.” The matter itself is quite apart from the original question, which seems to me to refer only to Mr Montgomery’s charge of “venality” against the Melbourne press, and I should not have taken the trouble to reply to his sensational telegraphic message did I not know how apt is the general public to believe the last speaker in a newspaper controversy.

‘I shall not assist the further advertisement of Mr Montgomery by continuing a wordy and useless conflict, of which the public must have long since been tired. I have challenged him to advance a single instance of “venality” on my part, and he has utterly failed to do so. I cannot, of course, deal with innuendo and ambiguous hints of unfair dealing (which can be as easily denied as insinuated), but I am fully prepared to answer and refute any tangible charge of “bribery,” “corruption,” or “venality,” which Mr Montgomery may think fit to make.

‘I have communicated with my solicitors ... if Mr Montgomery chooses to raise any distinct actionable charge affecting my character, either as a journalist or as a private person (and if his insinuations have any foundation whatever, he should be in a position to do so), I am prepared to bring the matter before a court of law, and compel him to either prove his assertion, or suffer the consequences.

‘I have been unwilling to adopt this course of action towards a gentleman with whom I have been on terms of intimacy, but his ungentlemanly conduct leaves me no alternative.’



After nearly six years employment as a public servant, Kendall now cut loose and moved to Melbourne. As his son Frederick put it years later in his ‘Memoir’ to Kendall’s *Poems*: ‘Wearying of official routine, and fondly believing that a competence was obtainable by literary work in Melbourne, my father removed to that city in 1869. The venture was followed by some years of disappointment and trial, for the time had not arrived in Australia – if it has arrived since – when devotion to a higher Australian literature could command an audience sufficient to ensure even a modest remuneration. My father contributed to the press in Melbourne and became

acquainted with most of the men of letters there, including “Orion” Horne, Marcus Clarke, and Adam Lindsay Gordon.’

Henry Halloran wrote to Kendall from the Colonial Secretary’s Office, 21 April 1869 in reply to Kendall’s ‘letter of the first instant’: ‘The resignation, therein tendered, of your situation as a Clerk in this Department has been accepted from the above date.’

Kendall described his arrival in Melbourne in a piece published a couple of years later, ‘A Colonial Literary Club by a Wandering Bohemian’, in the *Town and Country Journal*, 18 February 1871: ‘Circumstances – to wit, bailiffs, dear reader – having compelled me to leave Sydney for a short time, I took ship to Melbourne, where I landed on an ominous first of April, decidedly ominous to a man starting life in a strange city, with a stock-in-trade consisting of two or three letters of introduction, and a sum in money not exceeding four shillings. However, I made the best of it, and finding friends in Bohemia, I was baptized, and became one of the glorious brotherhood who live on their wits.’

17 April 1869 J. le Gay Brereton wrote to Kendall from Sydney: ‘I have often pitied you at your slavish life, and been on the point of suggesting a new field, such as you have chosen, but have held back for fear of urging something which might entail yet more trouble on you. If you feel at first at all doubtful or desolate in the midst of a strange city it may be a little encouragement to you to know that I think you have taken a wise step, and that with perseverance (which you possess) I consider your success certain. I am sorry we shall lose you from Sydney, but Melbourne is undoubtedly the right place for you. We shall be flatter than ever here.’

Charlotte Kendall and their baby daughter Araluen arrived by the SS *Dandenong* on 18 April. Sutherland records in Turner and Sutherland: ‘They took a house that faced the Carlton Gardens, and for a few weeks the prospect blossomed.’

George Gordon McCrae, who worked in the Auditor-General’s office, described Kendall’s initial attempt at employment in Melbourne in a memoir in the *Australian Women’s Magazine*, February 1883: ‘When Kendall first came to Victoria he sought for and obtained a temporary appointment in the Statistical Branch of the Registrar-General’s Office. His first essay, it was believed, was made on a “deaths sheet.” He floundered about for three entire days through a seemingly interminable maze of figured statement, adding it *up and down*. It came out apparently all right after some little labour, but, on adding it across, he found it impossible to make an agreement. Fairly bewildered, he put away the bewitched quarter acre of paper, drew his three days’ pay, took his hat off the peg, and never darkened that office door again.

“I may not be able to manage this,” he said, “indeed, it only means softening of the brain or madness if further persisted in, but still, if tried, I might be able to accomplish something beyond the range of most of those other ten-shillings-a-day men here.”

Kendall began publishing in Melbourne immediately. Indeed, he must have submitted some of the material in advance of his departure. The April issue of the *Colonial Monthly* published his poem ‘Ogyges’, ‘written after the manner of Tennyson’s “Tithonus” and Horne’s *Orion*’, alongside Clarke’s story ‘Pretty Dick’. The May issue published ‘Bell Birds’, destined to become one of Kendall’s – indeed, Australia’s – best known poems, first published in the *Sydney Morning*

Herald eighteen months earlier. 'Stray Thoughts about Tennyson' appeared in June. *The Australasian* published his 'Galatea' and 'In the Valley' on 17 April, and 'Aboriginal Death Song' and 'Camped with a Snake' on 15 May. He had arrived.

He was hailed in an article 'Our Australian Poets', 24 April, though not in Melbourne but in *The Brisbane Courier*: 'Less profound than Harpur, less epigrammatic than Halloran, Mr Kendall is, I believe, more popular and more read than either of those gentlemen; and the reason is, I think, because he appealed more to the sympathies of young Australia by his description of a hunting field, or the excitement of a stockman's life, a brush after the kangaroo or the emu, stock yarding wild cattle, until you feel you were along with him in the chase, or numbering your beeves after a ten hours' ride through scrub, shingle and morass; and then the brilliant moonlight nights and the starry skies on which you gaze after your day's hard work, and the romance such scenes begot. No wonder he is popular, and it is only the old question which Garibaldi asked on the banks of the Uruguay of his hostess – "Have you any poets here?" "How can we help it," said she, as she pointed to the beautiful prospect from her home.'

Kendall's acknowledgement to Horne's *Orion* accompanying 'Ogyges' may well have been a conscious tactical strategy connected with his move. Having corresponded with Horne, Kendall now sought him out. 'We used to visit him at his house in St Kilda; he thought a great deal of my husband,' Charlotte wrote to Sutherland, 6 September 1882. But, Kendall remarked in 'Notes Upon Men and Books Men – 8', Horne 'by the way, during his residence in the colonies, was for some reason or other unpopular in Melbourne literary circles'.

Horne was now in the final stages of leaving to return to London. 22 April 1869 Charles Dickens wrote to G. W. Rusden, Clerk of the Legislative Council of Victoria, who had befriended Dickens's two sons in Australia: 'We receive periodical alarms through the newspapers of a contemplated invasion of England by Horne. He is better where he is, and would be sorely disappointed, I fear, if he came back.' A month later, 18 May, Dickens wrote again to Rusden: 'I hear dark unformed rumours of Horne's coming back. He had better not. He will be sorely and bitterly disappointed, I am certain.'

20 May 1869 Horne's books were put on sale at public auction in Melbourne. They included first editions of Shelley, Keats and Hazlitt, presentation copies from Walter Savage Landor, Robert Browning, George Sand, Leigh Hunt and Robert Owen, copies of John Donne, the *Decameron*, and the *Koran*. The sale realized £60 6s. 3d. Horne gave Clarke a copy of his annotated acting version of *Gregory VII*, the play he had published in 1838. Clarke's copy of *The Great Peacemaker* by Horne was one of the books auctioned in the bankruptcy sale of Clarke's library five years later.



Kendall sought out the Yorick Club – or was directed to it – soon after his arrival in Melbourne. In 'A Colonial Literary Club by a Wandering Bohemian', he describes his first visit, when Clarke inducted him into its mysteries.

“I must make you an honorary member of the Golgotha. That fact that you are known to be addicted to scribbling will settle the matter of qualification, and as to the seconder, I will see to him. Let us imbibe another beer, and start at once.”

‘My reply to the foregoing was eminently characteristic! That I was a scribbler I was too vain to deny, the invitation to beer I was too modest to refuse.’

At which Clarke took him along to the club. 29 June 1868 *The Argus* had described the Athenæum’s elegant premises: ‘The entrance, which forms a sort of lobby or vestibule, has been paved with marble tiles, while a centre-piece, about 2 ft. 6 in. in diameter, bears the name of the club in deeply cut letters.’ The Yorick was rather different.

‘He popped into a dingy passage leading towards what appeared to be a bill-sticker’s back skillion. About half way up this corridor there loomed through the darkness a narrow, suspicious-looking flight of stairs. At the foot of this my little friend paused, and instructed me to follow him, warning me at the same time to be careful of the steps. Careful I certainly was, but a more villainous ladder I never ascended. However, we scrambled to the top, and lo! The full glories of the Golgotha burst upon me. Facing the landing an old door opened into an aromatic room, which, I was informed, did duty as “the reading, talking and smoking-den.” The most remarkable items of its furniture were the spittoons – useful utensils in their way no doubt, but distressingly plentiful and palpable at the Golgotha. Passing through a suggestive lavatory, we entered the library, where I found a stock-in-trade, consisting of a couple of desks, four or five chairs, a table, two shelves bristling with ancient magazines and effete blue-books, certain other sundries of a doubtful character, and a melancholy waiter. An apartment, called by courtesy the dining-room, and devoted principally to a brace of dissipated newspaper reporters, was the only other feature that arrested a somewhat disappointed stranger’s attention; but from the club rooms I turned with not a little curiosity to survey the club members.

‘There were about twenty of these gentlemen present, some swallowing, some smoking, some discussing local politics, some doing nothing at all. One elderly member of the company – a biped with a fiery nose and a puffy voice – was holding forth on horseflesh, and I immediately suspected him to be what he was, i.e., a sporting editor.’

Although the Yorick Club still had a literary and Bohemian reputation, it had also become increasingly conventional. Doctors, lawyers, businessmen and other professional types were taking up membership. As Kendall observed, their literary qualifications were slender: ‘There were some queer fellows at the Golgotha. On the occasion of my first visit, I was presented with a copy of the bylaws and regulations for the club – a document which informed me that all candidates for membership were strictly subjected to its first rule but I was never able to perceive the harmony between this information and the surrounding facts. The rule referred to provided for the election of men accredited in literature, science or art, and for their election only; but presuming I understand what is generally meant by literature, science and art, I am ready to assert that there were not more than twenty accredited professors of these in the club. In fact some of the members had never ventured in composition beyond a letter, in science beyond a stale truism, or in art beyond a schoolboy’s attempt on a slate.’

Nonetheless, whatever Kendall's doubts, he used the facilities and in due course applied for membership. Clarke seconded his application on 29 July 1869. Mackinnon records: 'Clarke became acquainted with another erratic, though differently constituted, son of genius, through the Yorick Club – namely, Henry Kendall, the foremost of Australian-born poets. As might be expected, Kendall met with warm sympathy from the friend of Gordon, and, moreover, with a helping hand in the hard life-struggle – which the Australian poet himself has described, in his memorial verses to the memory of Marcus Clarke, as –

the lot austere

That ever seems to wait upon

The man of letters here.

'Though the idiosyncrasies of the two men were in many respects widely dissimilar – Clarke's belonging to the polished school of the Old World while Kendall's were akin to those of his own native land, the New World – still the acquaintanceship ripened into mutual admiration and friendship.'

In due course that admiration and friendship soured for a while. In 'A Colonial Literary Club' Kendall described Clarke, under the name of Perks. The name may suggest Clarke's perkiness, or maybe Kendall's resentment at Clarke's appropriating some editorial perquisites; perhaps, too, at some semi-conscious level it recalls Kendall's patron Henry Parkes, another former editor and literary associate from whom he had become estranged: 'A casual observer of this young writer would very likely set him down as being merely a brilliant mime with a considerable stock of vanity, and a clever way of persuading everybody that he knew everything. Perks was not a genius, but he was something more than a brilliant mime. There was stuff in the man – good stuff too, only he himself did not appear to value it. Nothing seemed to satisfy him better than the borrowed and theatrical garb under which he contrived, too successfully sometimes, to hide his inherent gifts; in short, to affect the cynicism of a Coldstream, to carry that affectation into ordinary conversation, to make it the staple of his literary work, to look, talk, and write like a *blasé* libertine, constituted the chiefest delight of my juvenile friend – my budding philosopher. Occasionally, however, in rare and happy moments, he would fling his cant aside, and speak or write out his own thought like a man, and it is to those brief spaces of time that we are indebted for all that is worthy of association with his name. Should any of my readers be curious to know more of the gentleman immortalized here under the nom-de-plume of Perks, they can hunt up the files of a great Melbourne weekly and glance over its gossip, with a perfect faith that they will find his portrait painted there in glowing colours by himself.'

This is how the mercurial Clarke – upper-middle class Englishman, Bohemian, man of the theatre, *flâneur*, columnist, wit – could appear to the rather gloomy, wage-slave Native Australian Poet Kendall. In Gordon, however, no less upper-middle class, but withdrawn and often melancholic, Kendall found congenial company, and Gordon reciprocated the friendship. Howlett-Ross recalled in *The Adam Lindsay Gordon Memorial Volume*: 'As a boy I watched him strolling down Collins Street with Kendall.' Gordon paid tribute to Kendall's poetry in 'From the Wreck', concluding it with the lines

There are songs yet unsung, there are tales yet untold,
 Concerning yon wreck that must baffle my pen;
 Let Kendall write legends in letters of gold
 Of deeds done and known among children of men.

For some reason the verse was omitted when the poem was printed in *The Australasian*, 19 February 1870 and collected in *Bush Ballads and Galloping Rhymes*.

Kendall's recollections of Gordon in 'A Colonial Literary Club' testify to their friendship: 'I approach the next name with a sorrow that many, many years will not subdue, a name that is associated with so much that was loved in the days that were, so much that is missed in the days that are. A noble memory sanctified by the awful baptism of death, hallowed by the tenderest lights of an abiding friendship. Few of those who knew Adam Lindsay Gordon, that royal spirit so gifted, so human, and so unfortunate, will wonder that the head which now lingers by his grave is uncovered. Few who were acquainted with the fine, fearless, kingly nature which was hidden behind an unassuming, even shy exterior, will marvel at the loyalty which proffers this tender blossom of its regard for the dead. Gordon, like many others of the supreme brotherhood, shrank from all conversation on the subject of his own attainments or literary work. His was, in the extreme sense, a self-withdrawn life. Nobody, looking at him for the first time, without previous knowledge of his gifts, would dream that the man was a genius; while few, if any, after a successful penetration of his reserve, would dare to deny his title to that august name.'

Agnes Hamilton-Grey, who wrote a number of hagiographical accounts of Henry Kendall, claimed in *Singer of the Dawn*: 'A. Lindsay Gordon has never been written of as having a "congenital tendency" towards the use of intoxicating liquors; yet he was a very much freer user of the same than Kendall ... Kendall was powerfully influenced by Lindsay Gordon because of the much good in Gordon; but the influence, in the main, was for evil.' She ascribed Kendall's drinking as due to Gordon, a result of 'the intimacy that led to hours together, and together frequenting the bar-parlour', and claimed, in defiance of all the evidence, that 'Kendall, before that time, could not be accused of even a tendency to the undue use of intoxicating liquors'. Kendall's son, Frederick, later wrote in exasperation to J. K. Moir, 4 August 1938: 'This egregious woman ... she even tried to make out that his illustrious friend A.L.G. had taught him to drink! You can see it if you bother to look at her book. Of course *it was in his family*.'

Sutherland writes of Kendall in Turner and Sutherland: 'He was early admitted of the Yorick, then an entirely literary fraternity. He was far from being a typical club man. Dressed in a suit of black, with long loose frock-coat, his black-gloved hands folded over his invariable umbrella (generally laid across his knees), his tall and narrow-brimmed hat standing on its crown beside the chair – he looked like an undertaker from some melodrama dropped in among a godless set of jovial spirits. He never drank, he never talked; he occasionally, for the form of the thing, drew a furtive puff of two from his pipe. He gathered up his hat and umbrella and departed, to be the subject of droll witticisms among the rest of the light-hearted company.'

'Like a club, too, was the office of the *Colonial Monthly*, a memorable magazine, edited by Marcus Clarke. It was printed in a bluestone building near the foot of Elizabeth Street, to the right

hand of him who faces the railway. There the editor had a room to be his den; and there it was his delight to rally his contributors – Gordon, Kendall, McCrae, Telo, Horne, Shillinglaw, and others. Here would Kendall look in – take, unfortunately, his share in those little cheering wafts of Bacchus, and open his eyes to recognize some caricature of himself among the ludicrous charcoal or ink designs that frescoed the plaster walls as far up as the human arm could reach.’

Turner recalls of Clarke in Turner and Sutherland: ‘His sympathies went out mainly to the men in his own walk in life, especially to the impecunious members of the brotherhood. He repeatedly and earnestly tried to help Kendall, when that erratic genius fell upon evil times in Melbourne. He was devotedly attached to Gordon, whose verses he used frequently to quote, whose friendship he greatly prized, and whose tragic ending quite overwhelmed him with grief. Amongst the most intimate friends of his press days were Alfred Telo, a brother journalist, with whom for a time he kept house, G. A. Walstab, novelist and pressman, Dr Aubrey Bowen, and Dr Patrick Moloney.’

George Gordon McCrae left a detailed description of Kendall at this time, quoted in Reed’s dissertation: ‘He was a man about middle height, spare and thin but quite the reverse of athletic. He was pale and somewhat wrinkled, and the expression of his countenance as a rule sad. His hair which was crisp and curly (latterly of an iron grey colour) he sometimes trimmed, but never cut; in fact when I first knew him it used to conceal the collar of his coat. His cheeks were naturally bare but he wore a small rather sparse looking beard though his moustache in after years was quite a heavy one. The eyes were of a blue-grey tint, but changeable, and lighting up into a perfect blue as he became animated in conversation. Nervous to a degree he never felt at home unless he happened to have something either to touch or to hold, and many will remember the manner in which he used to embrace his umbrella as he conversed with them. His dress was invariably black – a frock suit with a tall black hat chiefly remarkable for the narrowness of the brim. Though good natured and amiable to a fault, he was nevertheless ready and quick to take offence. In fact, being a poet, he was over-sensitive and too often was apt to fancy malice where nothing but fun was intended. His resentment was short-lived and he easily and naturally “made friends” again. He was never strong (I understand) not even as a child. The sailor’s life that was chosen for him he simply endured.’

McCrae adds: ‘What he most loved were quiet sauntering of rambles in the country with a friend, but though he invariably shortened the road by his brilliant talk he was not what is known as a clubbable, a gregarious man. Perhaps, as I have thought sometimes, he preferred solitude even to the best of company. As a workman (when his heart was in the work) he was patient, persevering and assiduous. Still he so managed it that while he burned no end of midnight oil his work did not smell of the lamp after all. The left hand wrote all the poems we have read, the right hand being, owing to an accident (I think) partially paralysed.’

In ‘The Yorick: 5. – A New Light on Kendall’, *Bulletin*, 27 February 1929, Hugh McCrae writes: ‘When Shillinglaw, satirizing an absent member, exclaims “He’s a silly fool – yes, but such a *sincerely* silly one!” Kendall is the only man who doesn’t laugh. He sees the joke; but disapproves of the barb underlying it.’ Hugh recalled his father’s friendship with Kendall in a letter to *The Bulletin*, 25 June 1930: ‘McCrae’s description of Kendall as an undertaker was a

playful allusion to the latter's fondness for dressing in black ... McCrae called Kendall to his face "Mr Mould," and Kendall dubbed McCrae "Quilp."



Kendall had escaped Sydney, but his creditors were pursuing him. 20 May 1869 he wrote to the solicitors McCarthy, Son and Donovan in Sydney: 'I shall not be able to meet the bills at the end of this month. My wife joined me before I expected her, and my expenses, of course, became heavier. But there is no doubt I will be able in a short time – a very short time – to meet them.

'I wish to be fair to Messrs Parkes and Newman. The only chance I have to keep them from loss is evident enough. It lies in the giving of more time to me. Advise them if it can be managed, to pay the instalments on this occasion, and acquaint them of my firm intention to be ready with £30 by September next.

'In a commercial point of view, it would be an act of madness on their part to bring me back to Sydney. I would be then deprived of all means of paying them, and the alternative of the Insolvency Court would certainly be forced upon me. I really wish to secure men who have been my friends from a disaster of this kind. Of course you know that I have no property to realize upon.

'I saved my life by the step I took in leaving Sydney. There I had become a complete invalid. And what with official jealousy and family persecution, I had no chance to become better.

'I am writing in great haste. This letter will be forwarded by a Sydney gentleman who is acquainted with my address. None of my relatives know it.'



In late April 1869 Clarke's first book, *The Peripatetic Philosopher* by 'Q', was published by George Robertson in Melbourne: 'To you, dear purchaser, this little book is dedicated by your obedient servant the author.' A selection from Clarke's column from its inception on 23 November 1867 to 17 April 1869, it ran to 108 pages.

George Robertson was 'the first Australian to publish books on a big and systematic level,' John Holroyd writes in *George Robertson of Melbourne 1825–1898: Pioneer Bookseller & Publisher*: 'Up to the time of his death in 1898 he had published about 600 titles. He was the first to organize a publishing department. This was managed by R. P. Raymond who was also manager of the firm until 1899. Trained by Samuel Mullen, he had joined Robertson's staff as a young man, and proved himself to be a very loyal and able lieutenant. He was one of the Bohemian group led by Marcus Clarke. They dined together regularly. This sort of life did not appeal to Robertson, whose relations with his authors always remained on a businesslike, although friendly, level.'

In the May 1869 *Colonial Monthly* Clarke's second book, the novel *Long Odds*, still being serialized there, was advertised for publication the following month, and it duly appeared from Clarson, Massina & Company, the preface dated 8 June.

12 June 1869 Clarke began his 'Lower Bohemia' series in *The Australasian*, a series of six articles on Melbourne's low life, a development of the 'Night Scenes in Melbourne' he had written for *The Argus* the previous year. He may have had another book in mind. In his papers in the State Library of Victoria is a collection of cuttings of four of the Lower Bohemia articles together with an introduction, but nothing eventuated. Clarke's urban explorations were later successfully followed by Julian Thomas in *The Vagabond Papers: Sketches of Melbourne Life in Light and Shade*, four series of which were published by George Robertson in 1876-77.



Clarke was becoming jaundiced with the Yorick Club. In May 1869 he remarked on it in his Peripatetic Philosopher column as 'that mysterious body – supposed by some who don't belong to it to be composed of the cleverest men on this side of the equator'. The cleverest men were being joined by successful professionals whose literary attainments, insofar as they had any, were peripheral. Membership qualifications were being relaxed. Hutton records: 'When the Duke of Edinburgh, Prince Alfred, paid his second visit to Victoria in March 1869, he was made an honorary member, together with his equerry, the Hon. Eliot Yorke.' Johnson in his history of the Savage and Yorick clubs records: 'Rule One originally read: "The Yorick Club is established for the purpose of bringing together literary men and those connected with literature, art or science."' As at the London Savage, it was found that this excluded professional people of sophisticated and cultivated tastes who could contribute much to the Club and be of use to artistic members. At the 1871 annual meeting the rule was altered to read: "The Yorick Club is established for the purpose of bringing together literary, artistic, scientific and professional men." It would appear that the rule change formalized an arrangement already in place – at least six Collins Street doctors entered the Club prior to the change.' One doctor was Walter Richardson, a regular contributor to the *Australian Medical Journal* and father of the novelist Henry Handel Richardson. Bruce Steele notes in his biography *Walter Lindesay Richardson MD* that he was elected as member number 167 on 2 January 1871; his friend from England, the Victorian police inspector Alexander Brooke Smith, portrayed as Purdy Smith in Henry Handel Richardson's *The Fortunes of Richard Mahoney*, was also a member.

George Gordon McCrae records in "The Golden Age of Australian Literature": 'but one day when the name of the Chief Commissioner of Police appeared on the noticeboard the majority were filled with astonishment and all sorts of questions pertinent to the occasion (if impertinent in themselves) were asked ... Two members, according to my information, were detailed to wait upon the Chief Commissioner (himself a man at once genial and humorous) with the view of ascertaining his qualifications for membership.

'The question politely but firmly put, was met at once by the terse and apposite reply, "Gentlemen of the Yorick, am I not the editor of the *Police Gazette*!"

'They had got their answer and that with military promptitude; bowed themselves out and returned to make their report. Soon after, the new member was duly elected. Should any modern

doubt the accuracy of this story as given, it might be competent for him to inquire at the club whether at some time during the latter sixties the name of Captain Frederick Charles Standish, Rtd., did not appear upon the roll and thereunder the title of Chief Commissioner of Police. He was a very busy officer and perhaps his visits were like those of the angels, “few and far between.” For myself I may say I never happened to be on the spot when he happened to look in, whether to taste of our curious vintages or to scribble a note on club paper.’

The Yorick was not the only venue for literary bohemia. In *The Bulletin*, 18 May 1904, Maurice Brodzky listed the Bushman’s, Nissen’s Café and back parlour of the Argus Hotel as other meeting spots. And there were also the *Colonial Monthly* office and the Café de Paris, and later Miss Oliver’s Café and the Cave of Adullam.

22 May 1869 Clarke inscribed a set of verses ‘In a Lady’s Album’ for Henry Gyles Turner’s wife, Helen, perhaps reflecting, not too regretfully, on the masculine jollity of the Yorick and the *Colonial Monthly* circle.

My voice, in laughter raised too loud and long,
Is hoarse and cracked with singing tavern catches.

No melodies have I for ladies’ ear,
No roundelays for jocund lads and lasses –
But only brawling born of bitter beer,
And chorused with the clink and clash of glasses!

So, tell thy mistress, pretty friend, for me,
I cannot do her ‘hest’, for all her frowning,
While dust and ink are but polluting thee,
And vile tobacco smoke thy leaves embrowning.

Henry G. Turner described the verses: ‘Eminently characteristic in sentiment of that assumption of Bohemianism in which he was wont to delight.’ Turner included them in his memoir of Clarke in the *Melbourne Review* in January 1882 as not having hitherto been published, without saying who the lady was. Clarke, however, must have decided they were too good to waste in obscurity, and had already recycled the concluding stanzas in *His Natural Life*.



The Yorick was a useful forum for literary and journalistic contacts, and Kendall made use of its network. Dr J. E. Neild seems to have been particularly helpful to him. A couple of years later in ‘A Colonial Literary Club’ Kendall described Neild in the context of the Yorick and *The Australasia*: ‘One of its most accomplished contributors – a sterling fellow, well worth knowing, notwithstanding his many crotchets and the persistent pugnacity of his pen. This was the Jupiter of local theatrical critics, the Rehoboam of green-room humbugs, the terror of the buskined mountebanks, the admirer and fast-friend of genius, no matter how ordinary its position behind

the footlights might be. As I saw him at the Golgotha, he appeared to be a quiet, unassuming, little man with nothing about him to show the bull-dog tenacity, or the fiery spirit of championship characteristic of the Achilles of this pen. A month or two afterwards I was audacious enough to enter the lists against him, but if I had known the fellow to be so cunning of fence I certainly would not have tilted at him. I'd have seen him damned first.'

Kendall now wrote a lengthy account of the circumstances of his departure from Sydney in a letter to Neild from the Yorick Club, 22 June 1869: 'I do not want Clarke, Oakley, or any other of my literary acquaintances down here to know of the facts set out in this letter,' he stressed. 'I am comparatively a stranger to you; and my excuse lies in the facts that you are the only married member of the press that I know in Victoria, and that I have a firm faith in your honour and kindness.' Frederick Kendall published the letter in *Henry Kendall: His Later Years*, excising some remarks about Kendall's youngest sister's husband, which are restored here.

'As you are aware, I was, till lately, a Civil Servant under the New South Wales Govt. At the beginning of April last, I threw up my situation and came down here not overburdened with money. Now this looked rash, but, in fact, it was not so. The circumstances which led to the step were of a peculiar and most distressing character. I was brought to a pass where I had to choose either ruin in Sydney, or a possibility of distress in Victoria. My proper course was evident.

'Let me explain that for many years prior to my marriage, I was the sole support of my mother and sisters. It is well known in Sydney that for them I gave up the ordinary pleasures of youth; that every shilling of my salary was handed over to them; and that I even went without my lunch in the day so as to have an extra pound to offer them at the end of the month. All their property, including household furniture enough to furnish two moderately large cottages, was mine by right of purchase, though nominally theirs. In fact I made it over to them in a fit of good nature and after repeated requests. Lastly I, unsuspectingly, incurred the responsibility of their household bills.

'My reward for the foregoing course of action has been very marked. My youngest sister was privately married to an unmitigated scamp three months before I was made aware of the circumstance. Then I heard of it from the lips of the minister who applied to me for the marriage fees. The precious bridegroom had left them unpaid. The excuse held out by my relatives was a singular one. They knew that I was opposed to the courtship and the marriage was contracted as "a safeguard against me." Of course I was against the courtship. The fellow had no ability, no education, and was, out and out, a petty rogue. Added to this, he was head over ears in debt, and his yearly salary did not exceed fifty pounds. Indeed my sisters bought him his wedding outfit, and the draper billed me with the amount. As I was the nominal head of the house, I was obliged to pay it.

'You may be sure that it hurts me to have to enter into these explanations. I admit that my trust in my sisters was folly, but a man with the poetic temperament is generally a thing to play upon.

'Almost the gravest part of my story has yet to come. I have a brother in Queensland who on the occasion of his only recent visit to Sydney forged my name for £45. To save him and the

whole family from disgrace, I borrowed the money and paid the amount. I need not add that my brother has been of no assistance to any of us.

‘My wife is obliged to pinch herself and to go about in the plainest kind of consistent dress. But my sisters wore nothing but silks. I was almost at the brink of insolvency three or four times on account of their drapers’ bills. When I used to expostulate, the answer was always ready: “We must keep up appearances for your sake.” I was weak enough to believe them.

‘Young men will fall in love and I form no exception to the rule. I met the lady to whom I am married only four months before the date of marriage. We were to have remained engaged for a much longer period, but my relatives capped their conduct by an act which left me without a home; and Miss Rutter, upon my offer to release her from our contract, refused to give me up. But her mother – a peculiar woman fond of getting her daughters off her hands – forced us to choose either immediate marriage or permanent separation. We couldn’t bring our minds to the latter.

‘The act of my mother and sisters to which I refer was simply as follows. Having completed the secret marriage affair, they took the husband into the house – that is, after they knew of my acquaintance with the transaction – settled the furniture on him, and placed me in the position of a mere lodger. I left the house forthwith. But I did not know then of the fellow’s power over the furniture. When my marriage was pending, I paid, as I thought, all my liabilities, gave my mother and sisters a certain sum; and pointed out that from that time my responsibility with them ceased. I proposed to take my mother and half the furniture into my own house. This was apparently agreed to. None of my relatives however attended the marriage. When I called at their place with a view to the removal of my mother and a modicum of the furniture, the bill of settlement to my sister’s husband was shown to me, and I was laughed at. I was left with a newly married wife and without a stick to begin housekeeping on. Day after day I was inundated by drapers’ and grocers’ accounts which I thought had long since been settled. In two cases I allowed the creditors to sue me, but suffered for it. I went to the Jews, and from that time to the date of my resignation, I was in utter depression of body and mind. The moneylenders were like a cancer upon me. Being a civil servant, I could not take the remedy of the insolvency court; and my only hope was that my salary might be increased. This proved fallacious, as the salaries in our office were actually reduced. Then I found myself even deeper than ever in difficulties. My last and only source was resignation. In the first instance however I made an offer to the usurers which was rejected: - they being under the impression that I had literary influence and friends to help me.

‘Now you may see the force of my departure from Sydney.

‘I left Mrs Kendall with her mama, but could not persuade her to remain behind me for any time. The truth is she was persecuted by cruel asseverations on the part of my family.

‘As I have not been able yet to gain much footing on the Melbourne press, her dependence on me has thrown me into, at all events, great temporary distress. I have suffered much since my arrival here, but have incurred no debts. I should like however to obtain the loan of three or four pounds on my pen, for say three months, and if you could manage to get it for me without

unnecessary exposure, I should feel deeply grateful. At present I am actually ill. Scholarship does not go for much down here.

‘It tries me to have to ask a new friend to move in a matter of this kind. But under the detailed circumstances you will excuse and feel for me.’

He added a postscript: ‘Mrs Kendall knows nothing of this note. I wish to keep it from her.’

Maybe that was why he wrote it from the Yorick Club.



Kendall’s request for a loan from Dr Neild was not because of any laziness or lack of literary production. He had immediately and vigorously set about pursuing a literary career in Melbourne. He was apparently owed money by the *Colonial Monthly* before arriving in Melbourne, either for his article on ‘Talkers’ published in November 1867 or for poems published in 1868. Clarke made good the debt in May 1869 and Kendall offered to help him by writing for the monthly free of charge, but Clarke promised payment. Kendall appeared in the *Colonial Monthly* in April, May, June, September and October 1869, and January 1870 with more poems and a couple of articles. And now that he was in Melbourne he began contributing regularly to the *Australian Journal*, with poems or articles appearing in every month’s issue from July 1869 through to March 1870.

Not that Kendall as a poet really had much to sell from a strictly commercial point of view. Sutherland remarks in Turner and Sutherland: ‘As for poetry, seeing that no set of verses as yet published by any paper in the Colonies was ever known to cause the sale of a hundred additional copies, or add anything to the commercial value of the paper, it is not wonderful that editors print them chiefly as a compliment to the writers, and very rarely pay for them. Kendall did, in fact, repeatedly receive money for his poems, but no livelihood could possibly be made from their publication.’

But Kendall could turn out commercially acceptable prose pieces, too. He drew on what capital he had, recollections of his time ten years earlier when he sailed through the South Seas. Clarke and Gordon may have visited France in their youth but Kendall in return could claim to have cruised the Pacific. ‘A Fight with a Devil Fish’ appeared in *The Australasian*, 5 June 1869 and ‘Sperm Whaling’ in the November *Australian Journal*. He contributed further poems and articles to *The Australasian* around this time, six sonnets and the article ‘Ghost Glen’ in June and another three poems in August, though nothing for the rest of the year. He also contributed a couple of poems to the *Weekly Times* in October and three more in January and February 1870. There may well be other, unidentified contributions of his to these and other journals.



A couple of memoirs recall Kendall at this time. Ken Stewart quotes from a manuscript by George Gordon McCrae in the Mitchell Library: ‘He seemed to admire in others that capacity in which he owned himself deficient. Our walls were covered at this epoch with frescoes, rude but

characteristic; and, towards the end of the first month of our occupation, “numero quatre vingt douze” as we had agreed to call it, was so completely scribbled over, that our “artist” had some idea of attacking the ceiling as the only blank space fit for his operations. There used to be a Kendall or two over the fire-place wherein rested the office gridiron, but the whitewasher paper-hanger (was it?) has long since anticipated the hand of time in obliterating those works ...

‘He never said much, but the coterie seemed incomplete in the absence of the slight, dark figure, with the tall hat, the umbrella and the medusa locks – the editorial imp, a privileged homunculus, “Shrimp,” by sobriquet, who had never heard of Andromeda and never heard the word Medusa otherwise than in connection with a jelly-fish, dubbed him incontinently “the snaky Poet”; and within our little bohemia, he remained a Son of Medusa, to the end.’

Harry Chaplin’s scrapbook in Fisher Library preserves a typescript by W. E. Moore with its characterization of the Shrimp: ‘It was a peculiarity about this youth that he had quite an instinctive contempt towards the men of letters who called at the office of the *Monthly*. He looked upon them as men from whom it was wise to keep aloof.

“‘Is Mr Gordon in?’ a caller asked one morning.

“‘Haven’t seen him,” muttered Shrimp.

“‘Is Mr Kendall about?’ then asked the visitor.

“‘I don’t know,” snapped the youth. “I don’t take count of them poets. If I had my way I’d wipe the floor with them.”’

Charlotte told Sutherland in a letter, 22 August 1882: ‘His Melbourne life, which you allude to, could be supplied to you by G. G. McCrae, who was, during our residence in Melbourne, a very true friend of both of us.’ Sutherland wrote of Kendall in the *Melbourne Review*, October 1882: ‘By far the most intimate friend he made in Melbourne was Mr George Gordon McCrae.’

Kendall’s other closest acquaintance seems to have been Gordon. Sutherland writes in *Turner and Sutherland*: ‘Kendall knew nothing whatsoever of any form of athletic sports, had no pleasure in horses, and loathed what he considered the idiotic frenzy of the race-course. He and Lindsay Gordon could, therefore, never grow intimate by reason of a community of tastes. They certainly never became bosom friends, yet Gordon, with his truly gentlemanly feeling, looked beneath the odd exterior, which more frivolous wits used only as food for fun. He saw an inner core of goodness, and their common poetic enthusiasm made a partial bond between them.’

He adds: ‘But the intimacy of the two never was of that sort which included much visiting of each other’s houses. Both were poor, and both were proud.’



In May 1869, Cyril Pearl records in *Always Morning*, Richard Horne gave a ‘farewell demonstration’ at Captain Kenny’s bathing ship in St Kilda on how ‘a drowning man can be saved by straw’, floating motionless while Charles Steadman, ‘Champion of England’ towed him round the baths with a single straw. 12 June 1869, Horne boarded the *Lady Jocelyn* at Sandridge, as Port Melbourne was then called. Kendall, Shillinglaw, McCrae and other friends said farewell

to him at a 'merry party'. Gordon was probably not there since he was at a Melbourne Hunt Club meet that day. The following morning while the ship was waiting for the tug to take it to the heads, Horne jumped overboard and, 'braving the sharks and other pests for which Sandridge is noted' and performing some 'wonderful movements' in the water, gave another of his famous swimming demonstrations.

His return to England did not generate the enthusiastic welcome that he had hoped for. Charles Dickens wrote to G. W. Rusden: 'The *Lady Jocelyn* was so long coming over, that I began to think the Developer of the Australian Wine-trade, food for fishes. However, he turned up at last. As I could by no means underwrite his public claims in that wise, or any other wise, I delicately hinted, on his reporting himself to me, that we had best keep wide asunder, beyond the danger of discussing them.'

In *Always Morning* Cyril Pearl records Horne's shock at the cool reception. He 'so little deserved it, so little expected such a thing,' Horne told Robert Browning. 'It was enough to make one's hair stand on end, like reading one of Tennyson's *humorous* poems.'



At this moment that one poet surrendered the field, another rose into celebrity. 'Tis always morning somewhere in the world,' Horne wrote in *Orion*. The same Saturday that Horne boarded ship, 12 June 1869, Gordon's poem 'How We Beat the Favourite' appeared anonymously in *The Australasian* to immediate acclaim.

When he came to write the preface to Gordon's collected poems seven years later, Clarke recalled: 'Intensely nervous, and feeling much of that shame at the exercise of the higher intelligence which besets those who are known to be renowned in field sports, Gordon produced his poems shyly, scribbled them on scraps of paper, and sent them anonymously to magazines. It was not until he discovered one morning that everybody knew a couplet or two of "How We Beat the Favourite" that he consented to forego his anonymity and appear in the unsuspected character of a verse maker.' Madden confirmed the poem's immediate impact: 'Within a few days every sporting man in Melbourne knew it by heart. We were all horsemen then, and looked upon steeplechasing as the acme of the sport.' Robb wrote in 1912 that it 'has remained ever since as the most popular of all Gordon's poems.'

In an unpublished typescript in the Barr Smith Library, University of Adelaide, James Moloney recorded an occasion when Gordon read 'How We Beat the Favourite' at the Melbourne Hospital where James's brother Patrick was a resident surgeon. Patrick Moloney was very friendly with Gordon, Kendall, Clarke and George Gordon McCrae and James says they were often his companions. James claimed that Gordon was one of the worst readers of his poetry he ever heard, and with all the assertiveness of youth he criticized Gordon's reading on this occasion. Gordon took the complaint in good part, asked James to read the poem for him, which he did, and then presented him with the manuscript. James in due course lost the manuscript,

along with the manuscripts of 'Rose Lorraine', 'Passing Away' and 'Rhodopis in Melbourne' which he had been given by Kendall.

'How We Beat the Favourite' is subtitled 'A Lay of the Loamshire Hunt Cup', though there is no mention of Loamshire in the poem itself. Loamshire was the fictional English county setting of many of the episodes of Clarke's *Long Odds*, a name Clarke may have appropriated from George Eliot's *Adam Bede* (1859) and *Felix Holt, The Radical* (1866). Gordon may have taken it from her. Tenison Woods recalls that he read widely not only in poetry but also in fiction – Le Sage, Cervantes, Scott, Manzoni, Dickens, Thackeray – though there is no mention of George Eliot. More likely it was an allusion to the settings of Clarke's novel, the serial now concluding and the novel just launched on the market in book form. Was this a piece of ingeniously devised promotion, designed to place the novel and the poem into some commercial world of recognized brand names? Perhaps, but no one seems to have remarked upon it.



The concluding episode of Clarke's *Long Odds* appeared in the *Colonial Monthly* for July 1869, and Clarson, Massina & Co. published the novel in book form. The preface proclaims 8 June, Collins Street. Thomas Carrington had provided sixteen illustrations for the serial; eight of them are reproduced in the book. Clarke had revised the book from the serial, and made a number of changes in chapters fifteen to eighteen that Walstab had supplied when Clarke had his riding accident. It was dedicated 'To G.A.W. in grateful remembrance of the months of July and August, 1868'. The book ran to 344 pages, and it sold for ten shillings and sixpence. A second edition appeared in December 1869 for five shillings, though what exactly 'second edition' means in terms of printing and numbers is unclear. It may simply have been a cheaper reissue of unsold copies, or unbound sheets. As Samuel Simmons points out: 'It was the same in all respects, except that the words SECOND EDITION were obviously printed in by the printer, either on the unbound first section, or the bound volume. The impression shows plainly through a number of leaves.'

3 July 1869 *The Australasian's* reviewer was generous enough: 'We have closed *Long Odds* with a firm impression that Mr Marcus Clarke is destined to give us even better things. A dawn so clear appears to be the beginning of a brilliant career. In the meantime his present novel is by far the most satisfactory of the kind that has been published in Australia.'

Henry Mayers Hyndman, who was staying in Melbourne at this time and had become a member of the Melbourne Club, also reviewed it. In his *Record of an Adventurous Life* Hyndman recalls: 'The manager of *The Argus*, who was a member of the club, an old Lincoln College, Oxford, man named Gowen Evans, whom I had got to know well, upbraided me with my laziness, which as I told him was no business of his, and then pressed me to write a review for the paper of a novel by Marcus Clarke, which had just appeared. Marcus Clarke was then and for long afterwards the smartest *littérateur* in Melbourne, and it appeared that other writers of ability did not care to criticize his work. Evans persuaded me to undertake the task and I did it as well as I could.'

‘So far as I can remember it was not a bad novel; but it described scenes in England which the writer had never looked upon, and dealt with the life he knew only by hearsay. While giving the author full credit for its merits, therefore, I did not hesitate to point out very clearly its defects. I never got greater fun out of anything I wrote. As I have said the Melbourne of that day rejoiced in anything that was lively in the way of journalism or letters, and it was amusing to hear the talk going on as to who had been so rash as to criticize thus adversely the writing of this promising and rather prickly young Australian. The secret was well kept, and when at last it leaked out Marcus Clarke and I had become excellent friends. At the end of the review I had said that I felt sure if the author would turn his attention to the life and character of his own native country he would make a great name for himself. I only mention this now because years later, Marcus Clarke, recalling this remark of mine, sent me a copy of his novel entitled *His Natural Life*.’

Hyndman appears to have thought that Clarke was a native Australian, despite their becoming ‘excellent friends,’ and it appears that Clarke did not correct the misapprehension. Secure within himself, he could afford to leave others to their misjudgments.

W. E. Moore writes that Clarke complained ‘They hate me all round’, adding, ‘and the chapters they praise were the ones I never wrote’.

Clarke seems – or affected – not to have held his first novel in high esteem. ‘*Long Odds* appears to me now to be the greatest *trash*,’ he wrote to Charles Gavan Duffy in July 1872. And ten years after it was published, in his obituary of Telo in 1879, he remarked of Hyndman’s review: ‘The work, by the way, was properly damned by a genial critic spending twelve months in Australia in order to “know all about the infernal colonies.”’



Hyndman indeed damned *Long Odds* with a review of nearly three and a half thousand words in *The Argus*, 2 July 1869: ‘In reviewing a novel it is unusual, and perhaps a little unfair, to begin with the preface. Few would expect to find much there to criticize or to praise. The present, however, forms an exception to the general rule of level mediocrity, inasmuch as Mr Marcus Clarke has contrived to give therein the most exquisite reason for doing that which he ought not to have done, that it has ever been our lot to read. Mr Clarke tells us that he has given up the attempt to describe Australian life and character, because he would thus challenge comparison with a second-rate novelist who had previously treated the subject. This, no doubt, is an extremely modest and proper feeling. But, strange to say, the fear and trembling which he felt when he gazed upon the commonplace figure of Mr Henry Kingsley is changed into courage of a very high order when he is ushered into the presence of men like Thackeray or Dickens. Straightway he resolves to throw down the gauntlet to these giants of literature on the field which they have made peculiarly their own. The molehill is steep and singularly hard to climb, how easy then must be the mountain. Such is the reasoning which led Mr Clarke to choose London society as the scene for his novel. We are bound to say that the outcome scarcely justifies the original flaw in the logic. Our first impression on glancing through the book was, that it is very fortunate

for the author that no *Athenæum* or *Saturday Review* flourishes within some thousands of miles of the place of publication. We can imagine one hoary chief issuing forth in high glee, tomahawk in hand, his waist-belt studded with the scalps of the slain, to secure this fresh and succulent victim. And the blow might be dealt somewhat after this fashion, -

“It was lately laid down by a well-known writer that the day of our deliverance is at hand, that brevity will shortly be preferred before long-windedness, that the three-volumed ones are doomed to sudden destruction, and the novel will soon give place to the essay. We wish we could think so. Of late the home market has been glutted with the old familiar article. Shelves upon shelves have been filled with fiction since the beginning of the year. And, worse than all, the oases of originality are day by day encroached upon by the deserts of imitation. We look in vain for the streaks of the coming dawn. But the book before us will at least afford a short relief. A novel written in Australia, for an Australian magazine, and republished in the colony, is sure to contain much that is brisk and refreshing. We have suffered from many novelists, but for once in a way we shall have easy work. Not a bit of it. *Long Odds* – the title is certainly ominous – consists simply of the worst style of recent writers warmed up for the especial behoof of the colonial public. Victoria is following with the sweetest docility in the parental wake. The novel deals from end to end with English society; and English society, we need scarcely add, for the most part of high position. Like the fellow in *She Stoops to Conquer*, Mr Marcus Clarke says “I damn anything that’s low; my bear never dances but to the genteelest of tunes.” And his bear does dance in concatenation accordingly. Nearly all the characters are of the most excruciating gentility ... Of their life and their manners, and all that they did, is it not written in the books of the chronicles of Edmund Yates, Lawrence, Whyte-Melville, and Co.? And far better, too. Of the few lower characters who are permitted to appear, there is Mrs Manton, a lodging house-keeper after the manner of Dickens, with a pretty daughter seduced by marriage, and goes to St John’s Wood ... Mr Clarke is not scrupulous in his appropriations either. Thackeray’s *Miscellaneous Pieces* must be very little known in Melbourne, or he would scarcely have ventured to use such a character as Binns for one of his lay figures ... We have said enough, however, to show that there is not a spark of originality in the whole medley.”

‘There would be enough of truth in such a criticism to make it unpleasant, but it would be clear throughout that the writer was amusing himself at the expense of the author he was criticizing. As, therefore, we do not consider that a young man who writes a novel is guilty of high crimes and misdemeanours, even if it prove a failure, we shall endeavour to deal with *Long Odds* in rather tamer style. We think Mr Clarke was badly counselled when he published the work in a collected form. Much will pass muster in a magazine, and prove readable enough if taken in small quantities, which palls upon the reader of 350 pages. There is a tinge of presumption in endeavouring to describe a society with which the writer is not thoroughly acquainted, and the very smartness which may to a certain extent redeem the blunders when the story is read disjointedly, becomes not only wearisome but directly provoking, when it flows on in one never-ending stream ... we feel that reading and a laudable desire to describe brilliantly do not supply the place of direct observation ... The worst of it is that every here and there are to be found far

better touches – touches which show that had Mr Marcus Clarke been content to rely more upon himself and less upon what he has read, he would have written a good novel. The conversation, whenever the straining after effect ceases, is clear and pointed, and the narrative flows easily in good, forcible English ... All that Mr Clarke could do by clever imitation he has done, and that is saying a great deal. We had intended to have remarked upon a few eccentricities of style, such as the constant obtrusion of French phrases where English ones would serve the turn much better, but we shall have said quite enough if we can only induce Mr Clarke to take more care with his next work. He has all the capability for writing successfully and well, and to none would it give greater pleasure than to ourselves to see him produce a really well-knit and observant novel. He is clever enough not to need to strain constantly for effect. It is probably even more true of him than of most men, that, in writing, first thoughts are best. In conclusion, we can only quote, with very little alteration, the advice which he puts into the mouth of one of his own characters: “You have much to learn, much to forget; study men, study life, study nature. You are young; you have energies and industry, put your novel away, and read it a year hence.”“



Kendall joined in with the attacks on Walter Montgomery in *Melbourne Punch*. They were all anonymous, so Kendall’s authorship of any particular item is unproven, but Ken Stewart suggests he was responsible for deriding Montgomery’s self-promotional strategies, 15 July 1869:

Fantastically dressed,
For motley jesters please the public best –
Tapping his boot the Genius glances round,
Twiddles a diamond, and looks profound.
To cabmen bounteous, and to ‘boots’ superb,
The hero of the cab rank and the kerb,
With bow and smile for both, for both ‘Good day,’
Content if either patronize and pay;
Public and private life so close allied
That pasteboard only does their bounds divide;
One cannot say – so close are both akin,
Where may the actor end, the man begin!

Neild had approached Montgomery about helping Kendall financially and had either managed to arrange a loan for Kendall from Montgomery, or they had jointly launched an appeal amongst friends at the Yorick Club. There is a note to Neild from Kendall dated simply June: ‘Thanks for your note. I will write to Mr Montgomery today.’

There is another undated letter from Kendall to Neild from the Yorick Club, apologizing for having attacked his financial benefactor in the press: ‘I called this morning to see how you were. A feeling of delicacy prevented me from calling before. I am heartily glad to hear you are so well.

‘There are some “Don Juan” verses in this week’s *Punch*, to which the editor has injudiciously, and without my consent, prefixed my initials. The “squib” as it stands is full of awkward typographical errors; and there is one verse – that referring to Mr Montgomery – for which you must not hold me responsible. The stanza, previous to editorial alterations, good-temperedly “chaffed” Mr Montgomery’s *advertisements* but *not Mr Montgomery*. Apart from my obligations to that gentleman, I am bound to hold him a man of unquestionable genius – one who is by no means a “king of royal mummary.”

‘I am fretting over this matter. I have written the foregoing explanation because I consider that it is due to you. In the whole course of my five years’ association with the press, I have never written a line calculated to wound the feelings of anybody.’



Gordon won the Maiden steeplechase at Caulfield on 24 June, and was at the Melbourne Hunt Club meets on 5, 12 and 24 June. *The Australasian* reported, 26 June: ‘Mr Gordon was on Gaylad – his mount cannoned by a refuser, jumped short and hung on the fence, and his rider dismounted leisurely enough, and after expressing some very warm wishes as to his horse’s future welfare in the lower tropical regions, hauled him over somehow.’

He kept in touch with his South Australian friends. 21 July 1869 he wrote to George Riddoch: ‘I heard of your hurried passage through Melbourne, I think, from John, whom I have seen once or twice since I saw you.’ The same month he wrote to Blackmore, now clerk assistant to the South Australian House of Assembly: ‘I am regularly on the staff of *The Australasian* now, but you would only recognize my pen occasionally if you took the trouble to examine the paper as dry reports and routine writings are dull enough and these pay best at least brainwork ... most of my contributions are purposely made as dry as possible – “The Cross Country Prospect,” “Hunting Reports” among others.’ But he conceded that ‘The Arab horse, by Dervish’, and ‘How We Beat The Favourite’ were ‘thought well of’.

24 July *The Australasian* published Gordon’s ‘The Ring and the Books, by the Turf-Cutter’, a pragmatic and uncensorious account of the betting aspect of horse racing: ‘Merchants, squatters, dealers all speculate; and every monetary transaction is a speculation. You may put your money into the bank; the bank may break tomorrow, but you speculate on the chance of the bank not breaking. A pure gambler speculates on luck without judgment in a question of pure chance ... As a literary freelance, hovering between the borders of the turf and the confines of the fourth estate, I speak of things as I believe them to be – not as others think they ought to be ... Possibly we might abolish horse-racing, though the same is very doubtful, for even if we were “virtuous” – which we ain’t by long chalks – the supply of cakes and ale would not be materially diminished – but we could never put a stop to gambling, and whether good or evil preponderates in the mixture of sport and speculation that constitutes the turf, it would be somewhat hard to decide.’

Blackmore invited him to come and stay in Adelaide. An enthusiastic horseman, Blackmore founded the Adelaide Hunt Club in 1869. Gordon wrote 29 July apologizing for not having been

able to get away: ‘Still, if you want me, say the word. I have not forgotten how you came to see me when I was rather queer.’

Gordon remained deeply involved in the horse world. 21 August 1869, *The Australasian* reported that he was appointed a steward of the Melbourne Hunt Club, in company with Major Baker, George Watson, Herbert Power, John Madden, and other well-known huntsmen. It was a mark of a certain social acceptance, like Clarke’s joining the Melbourne Club. And it had its practical reasons, too, keeping Gordon in contact with horse owners. He wrote to Blackmore: ‘I have built a tip top stable on a piece of ground within a stone’s throw which I got dirt cheap and have a horse or two in hand.’ Once again he was trying to make money from his expertise with horses, building up a stables and making some money by training and buying and selling horses. He needed to. Literary freelancing did not bring in much. 12 August 1869 he wrote to John Riddoch: ‘I have been writing occasionally for *The Australasian* but they are rather a shabby lot. Hammersley is very well but old King the treasurer and paymaster is an awful old screw.’



22 July 1869 Marcus Andrew Hislop Clarke married Marian O’Donoghue (ordinarily called Dunn) at St Peter’s church, Melbourne, their marriage certificate, held by the Victorian Government Statist, records. It is not known how, when or where they met. Elliott suggests a number of opportunities in his biography of Clarke – when Clarke was *The Argus* theatre critic in 1867, or through the production of his *Foul Play* in December 1868. He may have met her through Walstab, who had acted with Marian and her sister Rosa at a Press Amateurs performance in mid-1866. Or through Montgomery, with whom he is recorded at the Café de Paris and out riding.

Mackinnon writes: ‘This young lady was at the time of her engagement to Clarke playing with great success a series of characters with the talented late Walter Montgomery, who entertained so high an opinion of her histrionic abilities, as to urge her to visit England and America with him. But the little lady preferred to remain in Australia as the wife of the rising journalist, and so they were married on the 22 July 1869, at St Peter’s Church, by Canon Handfield; the only witnesses of the marriage being the bride’s parents and the best man, the late Mr B. F. Kane, Secretary of the Education Department. And the strangest part of the ceremony was that the bridegroom, after the connubial knot was tied, left his bride in charge of her parents, while he went in search of lodgings wherein to take his “better half.” But how characteristic of him.’

Kane was a fellow member of the Melbourne Club, the Yorick, and the Athenæum. After Clarke’s death Hamilton Mackinnon, also a Yorick member, lived as a lodger in Marian Clarke’s house, and she was involved with him in the production of the *Memorial Volume*, so there is reason to believe his story.

There is another strange part of this episode that Mackinnon does not mention. In a letter of 21 July 1869 to George Riddoch, Gordon remarked in passing: ‘The great Montgomery left today for Adelaide after making an ass of himself. It is a pity that one so clever in his profession should be

so silly.’ Is it significant that that man who felt so highly of Marian’s acting that he wanted her to go to England and America with him, left Melbourne the day before her wedding?

Montgomery was in his forties, Clarke and Marian were both twenty-three years old. Marian had been on the stage for some time, in both Australia and New Zealand. The first issue of Williams’s *Australian Monthly Magazine*, September 1865, reported that Miss Marian Dunn was performing at the Princess’s Theatre, Dunedin. Her elder sister Rosa was also an actor, though had left the stage on getting married. They were the daughters of a famous comedian, John Dunn, originally O’Donoghue, who was born in Ireland in 1816 to an old Catholic family, and originally destined for the priesthood. He had acted in London and America before settling in Melbourne. Marcus was at the time of his marriage involved with J. E. Neild in revising John Dunn’s memoirs. According to Neild’s column in *The Australasian*, 7 August 1869, the work had been completed, but owing to family objections it was never published.

It was another déclassé marriage, like Gordon’s. Clarke’s background was upper-middle class, not with the aristocratic forbears of the Gordons, though based on a similarly derived – and evaporating – wealth from the now emancipated slave plantations of the West Indies. And as Gordon reaffirmed his Scots descent by marrying a Scottish girl, so Clarke reaffirmed his Irish background by marrying an Irish girl.

Clarke’s father had been born in Ireland and educated at the protestant Trinity College, Dublin. Clarke’s mother, Cyril Hopkins writes, ‘may possibly also have been of Irish origin, for her parents were Roman Catholics’. Cyril recalls: ‘He had accompanied his father on short visits to his relatives in the North of Ireland and had compared, in his crude and boyish but observant manner, the people he had seen and met with the types depicted by the novelist, and regarded by the ordinary, untravelled English reader of that day as truthful portraits of the average Irishman, and had found them wanting.’ Cyril adds: ‘In his letters to me Marcus Clarke occasionally referred to the subject of Ireland and the Irish. He felt that he had Irish blood in his veins, even if his father’s family was settled in the North of Ireland, and he was of course far too broad-minded and enlightened not to regard the Irish masses with sympathy and interest.’ Certainly the Peripatetic Philosopher declared in ‘Managing a Theatre’, 16 January 1869: ‘It has been said that every Irishman imagines he can do three things – make punch, write a leading article, and ride a steeplechase. Now I have Irish blood in my veins ... and have done all three of these things after a fashion.’

Mackinnon recorded: ‘Whether authentic or not ... Clarke claimed a distinguished genealogy for his family, which, though hailing, as regards his immediate ancestors, from the Green Isle, were English from a traceable Norman origin ... And among his papers were found the following notes, which, doubtless refer to this matter: - In 1612 William Clarke was made a burgess of Mountjoie, Co. Tyrone, and in 1658 Thurloe wrote to Henry Cromwell, desiring him to give Colonel Clarke land in Ireland for pay.’

Clarke’s family were from the protestant north of Ireland, and had settled there in the English land grab at the time of Cromwell. Granting soldiers confiscated land in lieu of pay was a practice followed when the English parliament failed to allocate pay for the army that Oliver Cromwell

used to put down the ten year long Irish rebellion in 1649. Only a tiny minority of the New Model Army actually got any land, and preference went to higher ranks; as a colonel, Clarke's ancestor was well placed.

For all his English upbringing and education, Clarke always maintained a significant relationship with Ireland. His reading included a substantial number of Irish writers – Jonathan Swift, Laurence Sterne, Charles Lever, Sheridan Le Fanu, George Farquhar, Oliver Goldsmith, Captain Thomas Mayne Reid, Clarence Mangan and Dionysius Boucicault. Sir Redmond Barry and Charles Gavan Duffy, both Irish, the one Protestant Ascendancy, the other Catholic, were important patrons of Clarke. Amongst his friends were Dr Patrick Moloney, his brother James, the opera entrepreneur William Saurin Lyster, and Henry Kendall, whose mother was of Irish descent.

There is another factor at play. Clarke's mother came from a theatrical background. Cyril Hopkins was told by Marcus's cousin, Sir Andrew Clarke, that her parents were 'a couple named Matthews, the husband a musician employed at the Opera House, where my informant thought that his wife may also at one time have been engaged in some capacity but not, he believed, as a regular member of the dramatic profession.' According to Arthur Patchett Martin in *Temple Bar*, May 1884, Clarke's mother 'had been on the stage herself'.

Marcus, in a letter to Cyril, recalls: 'I remember, when I was about eight, Lumley, the manager of the opera coming to dine at our house with some friends. I was down at dessert, and (my Father being out of the room for a short time) Lumley turned to one of the company and said, "His mother was the loveliest girl I ever saw."'

Photographs of Marian Dunn show her unmistakable loveliness. At some level, in marrying an actress, was Clarke following his father, and perhaps attempting to rediscover his mother? Throughout his life Clarke continued to be involved with the theatre, writing and adapting a score of plays, pantomimes, and vaudevilles.

Various commentators have remarked that both Clarke and Gordon had 'lost caste.' Sladen in Humphris and Sladen refers to Gordon's 'ordeal of having married into the working class.' In *My Father and My Father's Friends* Hugh McCrae quotes his father as saying of Gordon: "'He imagined he had lost caste and would say critically of himself, 'If only God had used a better clay.''" But these are second-hand recollections. Neither Clarke nor Gordon expressed any such sentiments themselves in letters or print. In the new world of Australia, caste and class barriers were to some degree breaking down. Both, in conventional terms, married beneath them. Both, significantly, married wives from non-English backgrounds, from the ethnic backgrounds with which they both had strong identification. Both were apparently Englishmen, both had become detribalized.



Kendall was already using the Yorick Club's facilities by 22 June when he wrote on its letterhead paper to J. E. Neild about the circumstances of his leaving Sydney. A month later, the day he was

nominated for membership, 29 July, he wrote to G. W. Rusden asking for a loan. Maybe it was to help pay the subscription. Rusden, born in Surrey in 1819, was clerk of the Victorian parliaments and one of the council of the University of Melbourne, and a member of both the Melbourne Club and the Yorick. The letter is preserved in Rusden's papers in the library of Trinity College, University of Melbourne: 'I should like you to keep what follows here a *secret*. I think I told you of my connection with the local press, and I believe I mentioned that as yet I have not derived much income from it. Indeed I landed here a perfect stranger with but the negative advantage of a literary reputation. I found that, as regards *The Argus* and *Australasian*, I could get only one foot in, to speak figuratively. I have not been able to better myself since. Sometimes I earn £5 per week – at other times nothing. This week is one of the black list – for next week I have fairer prospects. You will not wonder at my anxiety to get something to do in Govt. Mrs Kendall's illness has severely tried my resources.

'At all events, in the face of this note which is wrung out of me, keep alive the friendly feeling you evidently feel for me. You are the only New South Wales man of letters that I know here and hence the strange request which follows. I enclose the security afforded by a post-dated order upon *The Argus*, and venture to ask you to lend me a pound till this day week. I dare not ask the general manager to advance me money, and it would be against my interests to borrow from any member of the Yorick Club but yourself. You are an experienced man – one likely to comprehend the delicacy and extreme difficulty of my position – a stranger in a grey gloomy flinty-hearted city.

'In any case say nothing of this for my welfare's sake. Remain to me what you were before.'

He added: 'Excuse the blots. I am nervous and unwell.'

Then he added a postscript: 'I do not intend the order for presentation. It is merely offered as a safe security. I would pay you two days before its maturity. In the meantime you could keep it in your private desk and say nothing of its existence. If you should have an answer to make will you kindly send it to Dwight's in Bourke St I will call there after 4 p.m. today.'

Dwight's was something of an institution. Arthur Patchett Martin recalled in "'Orion" Horne in Australia,' in the *Academy*, 29 March 1884: 'What old Melbourne resident does not remember the second-hand bookseller's shop on the brow of Bourke Street Hill, near to the Houses of Parliament, where some fifteen to twenty years ago, and down to a late period, the colonial Quaritch – one Henry Tolman Dwight – held literary sway? Thither on hot summer afternoons would flock many men of local note – lawyers, doctors, divines, journalists – a motley crew, but united in the bonds of bookdom. It was no light privilege to be admitted into the sacred circle, for Dwight's possessed, in the eyes of those of the younger generation who cared not for the politics or commerce of a prosperous province, much of the charm of a London literary coterie. Among those who frequented the low-roofed, book-stuffed recesses of this shop was a little, odd-looking old gentleman with "cork-screw" curls, who came on periodical visits to the metropolis from the dark forests of the Blue Mountains, where he reigned in high official grandeur as Warden. Everyone at Dwight's, from that great functionary himself to the brilliant leader of the bar whose real aim in life was to collect rare editions of Montaigne, would greet with warmth the visitor. For

this strange-looking little old man was Richard Henry (Hengist) Horne, or as we invariably called him, “Orion” Horne.

‘I said “we” perhaps presumptuously, for my youthful obscurity placed me quite on the outer rim of this exclusive literary “set,” who, however, tolerated my frequent presence, perhaps because like other great men they preferred a boyish listener to none.’

‘Orion’ Horne had now returned to England, but Dwight’s continued as a literary meeting spot. Rusden seems to have come good with the loan. Kendall wrote to him: ‘I have to thank you for your kind note and its enclosure.’

A week later Kendall wrote to Rusden: ‘Will you kindly tear the memo in your hands, and take the enclosed instead. You will perceive that the news by the mail have shut me out of *The Argus*. I have earned nothing again this week. I dare say you meet with some squatters at the Club. Will you speak to some of them with a view to a situation for me. I am willing to go shepherding. Anything is better than the hard iron destitution that I am set face to face with.’

11 August he wrote again to Rusden: ‘In thanking you for your kind letter and your manner of dealing with the loan – which *I intend to repay*, – I have to confess alarm at your first paragraph wherein you tell me that I stated something about destructive news from England. I haven’t the slightest recollection of such a statement occurring in my note, and there is no foundation for it in fact. Is it possible that you misunderstood me?’

‘I wrote the note one morning at the Yorick. *I never drink*. In view of that fact, it is clear to me that I must have been suffering from an excitement equivalent to temporary insanity – that is, if your first paragraph referred to, is not a mistake.

‘I am much obliged to you for all you have done for me.’

He added a final line after his signature: ‘Your letter has frightened me.’



Kendall was sinking into deep trouble, both financial and emotional. 5 August he replied to a letter from Henry Parkes who had threatened legal action after Kendall had defaulted on repaying the monthly instalments on the money he owed to Parkes: ‘Your letter addressed to *The Argus* office has just reached me. This will explain the delay in my reply.

‘*I did* write to you prior to my departure from Sydney. The letter together with others, was left with instructions for its immediate postage. Subsequently I sent an explanatory note to the Messrs McCarthy containing a wish, clearly expressed, that its contents should be shown to you. As to the fact that I avoided personal contact with you, I have only one excuse to offer. I feared to consult you. Long before I had thought of throwing up my situation your manner to me became painfully frigid. It repelled and silenced me. On the occasion of our last meeting, I was about to speak of what led to my subsequent resignation, but you almost told me to go. I felt choked, and went.

‘I do not forget your previous loan. I have never lost sight of it. Indirect *allusions* were made to it from time to time. I thought my inability to meet it was evident ...

‘I left Sydney with no more prominent desire in my mind than to meet your loan and meet it quickly. My intended destination was New Zealand where I purposed to join Mr Barton. But want of money drew me here.

‘I agree thoroughly with the tone of your letter. You have been wronged – deeply wronged. I didn’t know however that you yourself were pushed. As to your threat to commence legal proceedings against me, such a course of action would merely complete my ruin ...

‘You know better than I do the cost attached to the legal pursuit of debtors in other colonies. At present I am not in a position to pay you even a tithe of the loan, much less attendant costs. So that you, in the event of legal process, would lose the additional money. I write this, not out of defiance, but with a real wish to arrest further loss.

‘As regard punishment, it is out of your power to inflict blows heavier than those I have already received. There is a stage of wretchedness – wretchedness brought on by physical and mental depression, where a man cares for nothing but rest. If you were to put me in gaol, I should probably be happier than I am now.’

Parkes, once able to afford to lend Kendall money, was now having serious financial problems of his own. By October the following year he was declared bankrupt. James Tyrrell quotes Banjo Paterson’s recollection of Parkes in later life: ‘The old man never had any money, though goodness knows he had opportunities enough of getting it “on the side” had he been so minded. On various occasion he came into the lawyer’s office where I was employed, always full of dignity, in a frock coat and tall hat, to discuss his pecuniary complications. But personal finance bored him. He despised money; he was Sir Henry Parkes.’

The Barton whom Kendall claimed to have planned to join in New Zealand was G. B. Barton, a barrister, journalist, and Reader in English Literature at the University of Sydney from 1865-8, who had written so enthusiastically of Kendall’s poetry, despite Kendall’s jibes at him in his *Punch* satiric poem, ‘The Bronze Trumpet.’ When Barton’s university appointment ended in 1868, he had left for New Zealand where he became editor of the *Otago Daily Times*. ‘One of the most brilliant journalists we have had in the colonies, and one of the most ill-used,’ Kendall wrote a couple of years later in ‘Notes upon Men and Books – 2’ in *The Freeman’s Journal*, 9 December 1871. Barton’s younger brother Andrew became Australia’s first prime minister.

Kendall’s financial problems were such that he was still unable to pay the Yorick Club subscription. He wrote to Neild, 16 August, from *The Australasian* office: ‘I should like to have my name withdrawn from the candidates’ board at the Yorick Club. At present it is a bitter farce on my part to seek election. I have not earned a penny for the last month. You can guess the state I am in. I don’t think the Melbourne press proprietors have treated me well.

‘Do you think Harwood would buy a drama from me if I were to write it up to the mark? Something like Douglas Jerrold’s *Rent Day* for instance.

‘I must do something. My health is failing fast. I have not slept three hours for the last seven days.’

Whether he was working at *The Australasian* and so was at last earning money, or had just appropriated the letterhead paper is unclear. He added a note: 'Never tell Mrs Kendall of Mr Montgomery's kindness. It would pain her too much.'

Since Kendall had no dramatic experience and rarely went to the theatre, disliking both plays and opera, the suggestion of writing a play was hardly practical. 'I never did, and never will, care for the theatre and its cuckoo world,' he wrote to George Gordon McCrae years later, 19 August 1880. Maybe he had been making a black reference to Jerrold's title, alluding to his inability to pay his landlord.

19 August 1869 he sent a note to Neild: 'Mrs Kendall intends to call upon you this morning about the baby. Like a dear fellow don't let her know of the loan by Mr Montgomery, or of the presentation cheque from *The Argus*.' Later the same day he wrote to Neild again: 'Mrs Kendall has handed me a prescription of yours which I have to thank you for. But I cannot make use of it. I intend to fight it out with open eyes. Sleep is out of the question.'

'It can't last many more days. I haven't the strength to face either Mr Haddon or the Weston people.'

'I can't pay my rent. I am dunned for it. Sleep and food are things I don't care about. I hide all these things from my wife. The deception is wicked.'



In March 1869 Massina had changed the *Australian Journal* from a threepenny weekly to a shilling monthly, and begun including a selection of news items to qualify for the cheaper newspaper postage rate, Campbell records. The *Journal* announced: 'the postage of a monthly part of the *Australian Journal* is two-pence, whilst the very same sheets, by being forwarded weekly, would be charged eight-pence postage.' In its new, enlarged form it was now competing head to head with Clarke's *Colonial Monthly*.

The *Colonial Monthly* was not proving a commercial success, despite the hopes Clarke had expressed to Cyril Hopkins the previous year. Four or five of Clarke's pieces from it were reprinted in the *Hamilton Spectator* in the first half of 1869, perhaps in an attempt to raise some revenue; unless they were simply lifted and reprinted. In August, after eighteen months' ownership and editorship, Clarke sold the *Monthly* to J. J. Shillinglaw. How much Shillinglaw paid, if anything, is unknown. He may already have had a financial involvement in it.

The publishing and printing firm of Clarson and Massina gave an account of their involvement three years later, in the *Australian Journal* for September 1872: 'A rumour has reached our ears that the *Australian Journal* has been charged with "having ruined three proprietors, one after another." It would not be very difficult, we believe, to trace this slander to its source; suffice it, however, to suggest the only possible ground for the origin of the calumny.'

'Another periodical, called the *Colonial Monthly*, was some time ago commenced by the same proprietors; but finding its efficient superintendence interfered unduly with their general business, the proprietors of that magazine transferred it to a well-known popular writer, who, with all his

undoubted talent as an author, and his influence upon the press, was unable to render the work a commercial success, although he unquestionably made it the best “high class” magazine in the southern hemisphere. From this gentleman’s hands the *Colonial Monthly* passed into those of a third party, with whom Messrs Clarson, Massina & Co. never had any other connexion than as printers of the magazine.’

In *My Father and My Father’s Friends* Hugh McCrae records Marcus Clarke saying to Richard Birnie ‘just before the *Colonial Monthly* went phut’,

“‘We must both write like hell.’”

“‘I’m afraid we do,” answered Birnie.’

The freelance life was hard. ‘All contributions will be treated as voluntary, and inserted or rejected according to their general suitability,’ the *Australian Journal* used to announce. Later it declared: ‘Our paid staff being complete, no payment whatever will be made for any contributions sent in. Contributors will please bear this in mind.’ Campbell comments: ‘Actually, this notice had never meant exactly what it said, for the management had always been willing to come to some financial arrangement with any local writer whose work they particularly wanted.’

The announcement may explain why Clarke had not hitherto contributed to the *Journal*. But on giving up the *Colonial Monthly* he seems to have come to some financial arrangement, publishing a two-part article on ‘Holidays’ in the September and October *Australian Journal*, and in the January and February issues reprinting material from his short-lived new magazine venture, *Humbug*. Kendall had similarly begun contributing, with something in every issue from July 1869 to March the following year.



21 August 1869 *The Australasian* published Kendall’s poem ‘The Hut by the Black Swamp.’ There is an undated letter of Gordon’s to Kendall expressing his admiration of Kendall’s verse, which may have been in response to the poem’s appearance there, or to its inclusion in Kendall’s *Leaves from Australian Forests* the following month. Frederick Kendall published it in the *Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Age*, 19 October 1933: ‘See if this MS will do like a good fellow – It is colloquial, tame and obscure (except about four lines) – the rhythmical catch is smart – I want something to explain the drama – I am sick of writing – I suppose you have often been that way – Your Hut by Black Swamp is glorious – I never read it before, now I know it by heart – you quoted to me the last verse, the only bad [deleted] objectionable one – “with bloody fingers hellish things” is simply ugly in my opinion – but the rest is grand, better as a piece of music than Swinburne’s Felisse (a great favourite of mine by the way) your first three or four verses are wonderful – I burn’t Camp’d by the creek which I was trying to lick into shape when I read them – from Now comes the fierce North Easter, bound about with to Fleet down by whistling box-tree butt against the hut can’t be beat – also the owls and squat ugly things.’

September 1869 Kendall’s second book, *Leaves from Australian Forests*, a collection of fifty-eight poems, was published in Melbourne by George Robertson at five shillings a copy. There are

some copies dated 1870. They may be unsold sheets of the original issued with a new title page, or copies sent for English distribution. The book was registered in London in 1870 by Trübner. Some are bound by A. W. Bain, Binder, 51 & 52 Frith Street, Soho.

2 October 1869 Kendall wrote to Lynch: 'I have brought out 1500 copies of *Leaves from Australian Forests* – 1000 for the colonies and 500 for home consumption. Robertson the publisher undertook to pay all the expenses upon the condition that the proceeds of the first 700 copies should go into his own pocket. If he should sell more I am to share the profits with him. You will perceive that the *Colonial Monthly* of October has put me at the top of the tree. At the present however, I should prefer a steady income of some kind or other, to all sorts of literary fame.

'You ask me to let you know how I am getting on. Very badly indeed. When I wrote last I had just received temporary employment on the *Daily Telegraph* as a leader writer. But this thing lasted only while one of the regular men was ill. His recovery has put me out of harness again. I am at present subsisting after a fashion by casual contributions to *Punch* and *Humbug*. These papers pay a wretched allowance for work.

'As yet I have gone through the suffering alone. That is to say, I have kept Mrs Kendall from feeling actual want. She is a girl that deserves more than I could say in the dedication.

'I must hope for better times. I would have higher spirits if I were well.'

Lynch was probably the Melbourne solicitor, William Lynch, an art collector and mayor of Brighton. McLaren records an inscribed copy of *Leaves from Australian Forests*: 'To Wm. Lynch Esquire from the author, in remembrance of kindness that will never be forgotten. 1869.'

Kendall inscribed another copy to Gavan Duffy, and at some point they met. Writing to Sir Henry Parkes, 23 June 1880, Kendall recalled: 'Many years ago your distinguished friend, Sir Charles Gavan Duffy – then Mr Duffy and in the cold shades of Opposition – said to me, "If I were in power, I would make it a point to employ men like you in the Civil Service. I am strongly of opinion that the peculiar abilities of literary men should be more sought after than they are by the Crown."' "

Clarke's copy was auctioned five years later at the bankruptcy sale of his library.

Kendall dedicated *Leaves from Australian Forests* to his wife Charlotte:

To her, who, cast with me in trying days,
 Stood in the place of health, and power, and praise; -
 Who, when I thought all light was out, became
 A lamp of hope that put my fears to shame; -
 Who faced for love's sole sake the life austere
 That waits upon the man of letters here ...

George Robertson had published Gordon's *Sea Spray and Smoke Drift* in 1867 and Clarke's *Peripatetic Philosopher* earlier in 1869. Kendall was in good company. But the book was not a commercial success, any more than Gordon's was. At least Kendall did not have to make a financial contribution towards publication, as Gordon had to. But the profit sharing agreement to take place after 700 copies were sold never came into effect. Sutherland writes: 'The book was

sold at five shillings, but only a few hundred copies were taken up by the public, though every effort was made to push the sale in all the colonies. The net result was a loss to the publisher of £90, and the poet had nothing but the mortification of feeling that the feeble glow of public applause is too easily replaced by a chilling frost.’



Having lost money on the *Colonial Monthly*, it is unclear how Clarke was able immediately to begin a new magazine, *Humbug – A Weekly Illustrated Journal of Satire*. But he did. The first issue appeared 8 September. The office was at 72 Little Collins Street East – Clarson, Massina & Company’s premises. Clarke kept a file of the magazine, now in the State Library of Victoria, annotating some of the anonymous contributions with their authorship: Clarke, Kendall, Charles Bright, J. E. Neild, Patrick Moloney, Richard Birnie, Rawlings, Harrison, Miller and A. L. Windsor. Mackinnon remarks: ‘Notwithstanding, however, all this array of talent, the venture was not financially a success.’

Clarke stated in his bankruptcy affidavit: ‘In 1869 I endeavoured to establish a weekly comic journal called *Humbug* and spent considerable sums of money on it, but received no remuneration returns.’ It is unclear whether Clarke or Clarson, Massina and Co. took financial responsibility for the *Humbug*. Mackinnon describes it as ‘started about this time by Messrs Massina and Co., of this city, under the editorship of Clarke’. Certainly Clarson, Massina printed and published it, it was advertised and promoted in the pages of their *Australian Journal*, and the *Australian Journal* and their other publications were advertised and promoted in the pages of *Humbug*. The nature of Clarke’s financial involvement remains obscure. The list of debts leading to his bankruptcy includes £151 7s. 6d. owed to Clarson, Massina & Co. for ‘goods supplied and work done 1870–1.’ But both the *Colonial Monthly* and *Humbug* ceased publication in January 1870.

For all his later reputation as a lyric and rather melancholy poet, sometimes augmented with a reputation for narrative, Kendall was recognized by his contemporaries as an adept satirist and topical commentator. Mackinnon writes of Clarke and Kendall: ‘together they worked on *Humbug*, the brilliant weekly comic journal.’ Almost a decade later, 5 August 1877, Kendall in answering J. Sheridan Moore’s ‘inquiry as to my Melbourne career’ stated: ‘In conjunction with Marcus Clarke I edited *Humbug* reputed to be the most brilliant satirical paper ever published in Victoria.’ Later in the same letter he states: ‘For three months I edited the best of Australian magazines, the *Colonial Monthly*; and had associated with me Marcus Clarke, Brough Smyth (the eminent mineralogist), Gordon, George McCrae, Father Bleasdale, and many others.’ All those named by Kendall were fellow members of the Yorick. Father Bleasdale, born in Lancashire in 1822, was a Catholic priest and former army chaplain, vice-president of St Patrick’s College, and a champion of Australian wine. He later settled in California where he established a vineyard. Brough Smith, Secretary and Chief Inspector of Mines in Victoria, had in the 1850s served under Clarke’s cousin Andrew, who, Vetch notes, in 1878 invited him to India to report on the gold discoveries of the Wynaad valley.

Mackinnon does not say that Kendall worked with Clarke on the *Colonial Monthly*, unlike on *Humbug*, and Kendall's own phrasing can be taken to suggest that while it was in conjunction with Clarke that he edited *Humbug* this was not the case with the *Colonial Monthly*. Clarke was just one of a number of people 'associated' with him there, on whom he could draw for suggestions or contributions. Possibly Kendall worked editorially on the *Colonial Monthly* after Clarke had handed it over to Shillinglaw. Possibly he makes no mention of Shillinglaw because of their later bitter quarrel in 1870. Certainly Kendall submitted work to Shillinglaw for the magazine. In 'Kendall's Views of Contemporary Writers: A Survey of his Correspondence' Donovan Clarke quotes a note from Kendall accompanying his poem 'Araluen,' published in Shillinglaw's first issue in September 1869: 'Herewith are the verses. I think they are in my very best manner. Can you send a proof to my address, 9E Moor Street, Fitzroy.'

What Kendall meant by editing *Humbug* is not exactly clear. Perhaps it simply means copy-editing, or even proof-reading. Possibly it implies some soliciting of contributions, reading of unsolicited contributions, or participation in editorial meetings. In his memoir of 'Butler Cole Aspinall' Charles Bright, a former editor of the Melbourne *Punch*, recalled: 'The paper was published on Thursday morning, and each Thursday evening a gathering of its contributors was held to allocate the work of the artist for the following number, and enjoy a pleasant time generally.' *Humbug* no doubt followed this practice that the London *Punch* had initiated and both the Sydney and Melbourne *Punch* continued. Certainly *Humbug* had an editorial policy of selecting a theme, and treating it with a full-page illustration by Thomas Carrington, a prose text and a poem. Whether this was decided at formal lunches, dinners, or late night discussions at the Yorick Club is unknown. The second issue, 15 September, carried Clarke's essay on 'The Curse of the Country', Kendall's poem 'The Demon of Drink', and Carrington's illustration 'King Nobbler'. 'We are a nation of *Drunkards*,' wrote Clarke. 'King Nobbler rules over us, and all classes bow down before him.'

'No man can hope to succeed in business, profession, or society, unless he is prepared to take his chance of death in an asylum for inebriates.' Kendall concurred:

Thou art devil and despot to men;
 Thy grip is on wise and on weak –
 On mighty of sword and of pen;
 On those who in council-halls speak.

The sentiments are noble, and no doubt heartfelt. Clarke's bankruptcy statement listed a debt of £150 for wines and spirits, and allusions to Kendall's inebriation were beginning to appear in the press, notably in *Humbug* itself, by the end of the year.

'Humbug' was hypocrisy and the young writers of *Humbug* set out to denounce it. Kendall's dedicatory verse, 'Humbug', in the first issue, 8 September 1869, declares:

All thine is the earth with its people;
 The chiefs of the council are thine;
 And they who speak under the steeple;
 And they who talk over the wine.

The practice of humbug was the practice of the established order of things in all its corruption and with all its concomitant financial rewards. Kendall's poem concluded:

Thou art sinister, subtle, and evil;
 Thou art hollow, and empty, and dry:
 Thy name is the name of the devil;
 And thy life is a marvellous lie.
 Thou hast painted thy face with fair colours;
 Thou hast hidden the clay of thy feet;
 But O god of the guineas and dollars,
 Thy service is sweet.

It was to be a journal of comment and opinion, concerned to offer attacks on social evils and injustices, as well as to divert with humour. 22 September Kendall wrote a piece on 'L.S.D.-ism; or, the Almighty Dollar' in the persona of a usurer, 'a man who ladles out money to hard-up Government clerks, etc., at rates of interest varying from sixty to two hundred per cent per annum.

'I hear you exclaim, "What an unmitigated robber!" My rejoinder is simple and precise. You are a humbug. Why should I not make the most of my money? I don't force my interest on people – I merely state my rates; and it is in the power of those who come to me for loans to go back as they came. It is all very well to prate about the ethics of the thing, but what are ethics to a man of my class? My mission in life is to make money.'

It was another topic of which Kendall, like Clarke and Gordon, had personal experience. Clarke's piece 'On Borrowing Money' appeared the following week, 29 September. It took a similar anarchic line, this time from the point of view of the borrower. 'It is no use borrowing, if you mean to pay.' Cyril Hopkins remarked in puzzlement: 'One wonders, on the other hand, how, in view of his own notorious weakness in money matters, Marcus Clarke could have brought himself to write, even in fun, in the article "On Borrowing Money," the passage "I am rather good at it. I have been always borrowing. If I can borrow nothing else, I borrow ideas," because this was the very charge occasionally brought against him by unfriendly contemporaries.'

The theme of 27 October was the gap between the privileged and the poor. 'Fashion and Famine' was the title for a prose diatribe by Clarke, a poem by Kendall, and a cartoon showing the contrast between competing financial solicitations: 'The Mayor's Ball. "With pleasure" £2. 2s.' 'The Immigrants' Home. "Can't afford it." 2s.'

20 October *Humbug* took on spiritualism. It offered a £50 prize to anyone who could correctly tell the contents of a message in a sealed tin box deposited in the Union Bank. By 24 November there had been thirty replies, none of them correct. It is not clear whether James Smith's new enthusiasm for spiritualism had already begun, and Clarke was taking an opportunity to snipe at him. Lurline Stuart in her biography dates Smith's conversion to spiritualism as 1870; but already in 1869 *Humbug* contributor Charles Bright had begun investigating spiritualism for *The Argus*. He ended up converted and took to lecturing on the topic in Australia and the United States.



Kendall did his best to drum up notice for *Leaves from Australian Forests*. He wrote to Neild: 'Will you kindly speak to Haddon about my book. The review in *The Argus* is anxiously looked for by Robertson. It will do or undo the volume.'

The Argus reviewed appeared 8 October: 'He does not strain after sublimity of thought or attempt to record the more majestic phases of human passion; he contents himself with lovingly painting the glories of a sunset or the gleaming sands of a sea-shore. The admirers of epic grandeur or subtle mental analysis will find but little to please their taste in Mr Kendall's poems; but to that large class of readers who place the faculty of intense appreciation of colour and sound above that of perceptive sympathy for human passion, we can recommend a critical perusal of the *Leaves*. Mr Kendall is evidently a disciple of that school which Keats created from the inspiration of Spenser, Tennyson perfected, and Swinburne is destroying. He is alliterative, passionate, and overflowing with metaphor. His adjectives are all superlatives. Like the climate of his native Australia, there is no twilight in his poetry. It is either broad day or blackest night. His heroes are either angels or demons. His heroines are either Messalinas or Griseldas. His seas are mountains high, his winds tempests, and his stock-riders always at full gallop. But his ear for versification is perfect, his rhythm and his daring extravagance of epithet are equal to Swinburne's, and his exquisite sense of natural beauty rivals that of Keats ...'

The Melbourne *Economist*, 8 October, declared: 'In a new country people are usually so busily engaged making money as to have little time or inclination to devote to *belles lettres*, and poets have to betake themselves to driving escorts. It is therefore not without surprise we take up a volume of poems, by Kendall, of which, however great our literature may become, Australians will never have cause to be otherwise than proud. Kendall is a true poet, and goes straight to the fountainhead of nature for inspiration: although he modestly compares himself to one wandering in Syrian bowers, he bears away, unwittingly, "spoils of perfume." His fancy is sweet and copious, but he seldom rises to the sublime. As he describes chiefly Australian scenery, where everything is new, and where the seasons are reversed, his poetry has about it a strong dash of originality, which, perhaps, would have been wanting if he had been confined to England, where all the phenomena of nature have been so well and so often described. The description, for instance, of the bush fire in "The Death in the Bush" is very fine, as also is that of the Warrigal, which, he says, hears the watchdog's bark, "And flees like a phantom of fear." This little work is very neatly got up by Mr George Robertson, and will form a neat and appropriate birthday present for young Australians.'

George Oakley under his pseudonym Evelyn reviewed the book at some length in the October *Colonial Monthly*: 'Harpur might perhaps be stronger, haply even more original, thinker; but he lacked the grace which Kendall infused by a more cultivated attention to metrical laws. His verse was always rude and lawless ... Kendall's strength lies as much in the copiousness of the thought as in the curious alliterative phraseology which is the medium of its expression. He is full of startling and rarely used adjectives ... His love knows nothing of chastity or purity, it is a wild hot foaming passion, libidinous in thought, and preying solely upon physical beauty. He

appreciates with difficulty well governed love ... His lyrics are full of “the heart-beats of passion” – he invests the female form with a sumptuousness of beauty which kindles the pulse as you read it; he makes his women Cleopatras in the impassioned suggestiveness of their physique ... these are not the women of love, but of lust ... Such women as these are never, we hope, destined to be the daughters, wives, and mothers of the future generations of Australians ... His mind has undergone classical saturation ... It may be objected that alliteration is itself a sign of weakness and want of syllable command, and that no poet can be accounted great who relies chiefly upon what is at the best a trick of literature. But with Mr Kendall alliteration is not so much a peculiar craft, wielded to cover deficiencies, but a necessity. His prose rings with it as freely as his verse, and in it the remarkable power of his descriptions of Australian scenery chiefly lies ... Kendall has strung his lyre with finer skill [than Harpur] and has thus become the first poet in whom, it may be said, Australia speaks.

‘We have written enough to show that Mr Kendall’s muse is of varied power and attraction. It knows nothing of the dull dignity of the commonplace; it gives out a few uncertain tones; it is never spoiled by mere nonsense, tinkered into prettiness to catch the ear. He is light, pleasing, half cheerful at times; but you can never forget that the levity is slightly forced, and that he is most truly the singer of sorrow ... Setting aside all his mannerisms, all his literary foibles, we have enough in the present volume to assure us that a great poet is rising in the land. All that he has perfected, the immense strides of improvement he has shown since 1862, open out a brighter vista in the future.’



The October 1869 *Australian Journal* published Kendall’s essay ‘About Some Men of Letters in Australia’: ‘The names I am about to mention are – allowing an exception or two – not likely to outlast the present generation; but as they belong to men who have attempted to lay the foundation-stone of Australian literature, this paper may be of some service to Halliwells or Colliers in their search for particulars relating to our contemporary writers and contemporary writings.

‘New South Wales may fairly lay claim to be the birthplace of the most distinctive literature Australia has produced. She has no novelist equal to the brilliant author of *Long Odds*; no historian to be named beside the Rev. J. T. Woods; no journalists comparable to the leader-writers of *The Argus*; but she has given us two men at least – Charles Harpur and Daniel Henry Deniehy – whose writings, however ill-balanced they may be, have an indigenous flavour that we cannot discover in any other local literary result.’

In many ways it was a catalogue of despair. Harpur’s life is presented as ‘so sad, so full of hopeless trouble from beginning to end’; Deniehy experienced ‘all the vicissitudes of a really hard life’; Michael’s ‘vexed life’ and ‘syllables of despair’ culminated in suicide. Kendall could have been reflecting on his own existence, and no doubt was.

5 October he wrote to Neild, who had been elected treasurer of the Yorick club at the first annual general meeting: ‘I am unable to pay my entrance fee and subscription to the Yorick Club

at the present. I have tried my best to save the money for the purpose, but without success. Indeed I may not have the means within the next fortnight. I believe you know the causes of my inability. If necessary, will you kindly treat my election as void. If, on the other hand, you should feel disposed to grant me a fortnight's extension I will pay up at the end of that time.'

He wrote to Neild again the following day, apologizing for offending him by criticizing Bandmann, the actor-manager at the Theatre Royal, whom Neild had favourably reviewed in *The Australasian*: 'I have sent you a separate note with reference to my subscription to the Yorick Club.

'I must apologize for my criticism of Mr Bandmann's Narcissa. I think I annoyed you by presuming to offer my impression of his interpretation of the character. You were unwell at the time, and it was a piece of rudeness to disagree with your published decision on Mr Bandmann's acting. I hope you will forgive me in view of the fact that I am rarely well myself.

'I went to see *Hamlet*; and on the whole I was electrified by what must be genius. But I do not think myself a judge in these matters. My acquaintance with Shakespeare is simply a closet one.'

Another letter followed soon: 'I cannot see any way to the payment at present of my club subscription. Will you kindly look upon my election as void. You know I cannot help myself. At all events, I consider that my subscription ought to be paid whether my election be considered void or not.

'I am very unwell this morning.'

A postscript added: 'Will you speak to Mr Bandmann about the proposed drama. I will start on it *at once*.'

25 November he wrote again: 'Thanks for your note. I hope you will be able to pay my subscription to the Yorick out of the testimonial money. I should consider my expulsion a disgrace.'

There is no evidence that the proposed drama was ever begun. But a testimonial collection seems to have been mounted that helped him out financially. For a while.



In October 1869 Gordon finally accepted Blackmore's invitation to visit Adelaide: 'I have not the self-denial and strength of will now to take good exercise and to be abstemious by myself as I used to be in the days of old. But with a "guide, philosopher and friend" like yourself I could do this and enjoy it and I might return to Melbourne like a giant refreshed from my trip.' Gordon rode Blackmore's Lancelot in the first Hunt Club Cup Steeplechase and came fourth.

9 October, *The Australasian* published a letter from the English writer George Whyte-Melville, praising Gordon's poems: 'I have to thank you for a volume of poetry called *Sea Spray and Smoke Drift*. Will you kindly convey to the author, when you see him, my sincere thanks for the pleasure he has given me. I know nothing more spirited, or with more dash about it, in the language. The sentiments, too, are so manly and encouraging; while here and there one comes upon a couplet or stanza which will be quoted when most of us are forgotten. If your friend rides

as well as he writes (and I am sure he is a real workman), I should like to put him up in any steeplechase for which I had a likely winner, and should be still more pleased to see him in the saddle with a good pack of fox-hounds. I think his ballads are equal to Warburton's Cheshire Hunting Songs, or even Charles Kingsley's Riding Stories. Can I say more?'

Whyte-Melville had achieved fame with his novel *Holmby House* (1859) set during the English civil wars. A copy of his *Market Harborough* is listed in Clarke's library sale catalogue. After serving in the Crimean War he had returned to England and devoted his time to field sports, dying in a riding accident while hunting in 1878. Gordon was an admirer of his work and wrote asking him if he could dedicate his forthcoming *Bush Ballads and Galloping Rhymes* to him. Whyte-Melville responded saying he would be proud and much flattered to be associated with anything Gordon wrote. In an epigraph to chapter five of his novel *Satanella* (1872) Whyte-Melville quoted six lines from Gordon, noting: 'From "The Romance of Britomarte," not the least stirring of those spirited verses called *Bush Ballads and Galloping Rhymes* composed by the late A. Lindsay Gordon, and published at Melbourne, Australia, 1870.'

Back from Adelaide a week later, Gordon rode at the Melbourne Hunt Club meeting. *The Argus* reported, 15 October: 'Major Baker's Prince Rupert ... created a favourable impression, and when Mr Gordon was seen in the saddle the general public, with whom Mr Gordon is wonderfully popular, fondly anticipated a repetition of the Babbler-cum-Viking victories of last year ...

'The race was a chapter of accidents – as every horse in the race, with the exception of the winner, met with some mishap or other. Mr Gordon had a severe fall at the far side of the course, and he did not return to the saddling paddock until a considerable period had elapsed, having received a thorough soaking from the rain which came down in torrents immediately after the Grand National had been run ...

'In the Selling Steeplechase Mr Gordon, to the gratification of all present, made his appearance on Shamrock, but we fancy that he had hardly recovered from the effects of his fall on Prince Rupert, as he did not perform in his accustomed style.'



Clarke's *Humbug* was not without rivals. The *Melbourne Punch* had been established by Frederick Sinnett in 1855. James Smith had edited it from 1857 until 1863, and Smith's father-in-law, William Kelly, at one time landlord of the Argus hotel, had been its proprietor from 1863 to 1866. Clarke had contributed to it on his arrival in Melbourne. In a letter to Sheridan Moore in 1876 Kendall claimed that during his time in Melbourne 'I was a principal contributor to *Melbourne Punch* and received a larger remuneration for my work than any other contributor.'

Clara Aspinall remarked in 1862: '*Punch* of Melbourne is just as facetious and full of fun as *Punch* of London.' It had a political agenda, Gavan Duffy recalled: 'The Conservative Party were effectually served by a satirical journal named *Melbourne Punch*.' *Humbug* was more progressive. Nonetheless, contributors overlapped. Thomas Carrington, the current *Punch* editor,

contributed illustrations to *Humbug*. Charles Bright, who had edited *Punch* from 1863 to 1866, recalled being ‘closely associated with Clarke in one of his literary enterprises – the publication of a satirical weekly journal entitled *Humbug* – and my estimate of his ability was an exalted one.’

And then on 2 October *Touchstone* was established, another satirical weekly. McLaren quotes Turner’s note inside a bound copy of the journal’s complete run, now in the State Library of Victoria: ‘This volume contains all that was published of *Touchstone*, a journal projected in opposition to *Punch* at a time when that facetious organ suddenly changed its politics, having as was alleged been bought over by the enemy. *Touchstone* was edited during nearly all its career by James Smith, and some of its best verses are from his pen. It would have had a better chance of working into smooth financial water but that Marcus Clarke brought out shortly afterwards a journal called *Tomahawk* which divided the support of the party and both came to a financial smash.’

Turner’s note, dated over a year later, January 1871, is inaccurate; Clarke’s journal predated *Touchstone* and was called *Humbug*. In the *Memorial Volume* Mackinnon characterized *Humbug*: ‘A remarkably clever rival to *Touchstone*, a weekly journal conducted by Mr James Smith, between whom and Clarke there existed an absurdly bitter feeling of rivalry, although both belonged to the literary staff of the same journal.’ The passage was omitted from the revised biography in the *Austral Edition*.

Lurline Stuart traces Smith’s career in her biography *James Smith: The Making of a Colonial Culture* and in her doctoral thesis. Born in England in 1820, he had been appointed to *The Argus* staff at a salary of £500 a year in 1856. From 1863 to February 1869 he was parliamentary librarian, and when his position was abolished rejoined *The Argus*, where he was its regular drama critic. Clarke, of course, had been sacked as drama critic of *The Argus*. Both had theatrical interests, both wrote plays, both wrote literary journalism, both wrote novels and essays. English class divisions seem to have persisted between the upper-middle class metropolitan Clarke and the provincial petit-bourgeois Smith. Smith was of an older generation and more conservative than Clarke, and the two did not get along with each other. Turner, likewise more conservative than Clarke, recalled Smith in an address to Beefsteak Club, 10 August 1918: ‘A cheerful, blithe companion, most engaging in his manner, and playfully humorous in his talk.’

Humbug could not resist sniping at Smith. 15 September J. E. Neild attacked Smith as ‘The Literary Humbug,’ drawing on details of Smith’s life and career: ‘It would be curious to enquire how the L. H. made his entry into literature. Was he a draper who had aspirations beyond tapes and cotton spools? Or a shoemaker, like Samuel Drew, who wrote treatises on his lap-stone; or a starveling schoolmaster, who thought there was some other destiny for him than setting copies, and feruling stupid boys? Or a clerk on eighty pounds a year, who yearned to write leading articles, and be a great moral power? Or an ambitious printer, like Douglas Jerrold, but with none of Jerrold’s genius? Or did he begin life as a writer, and was he, say, the editor of a small country newspaper, one of those newspapers that have a “poet’s corner,” and devote four columns to the chronicling of tea parties? Did he write pretty moral stories after the manner, but with none of the

zest, of Miss Edgeworth? Or was he great in the aesthetics of art, and compiled a book, say, about painters, which gave him the opportunity, when speaking of himself, to put after his name, “Author of *Artists and Men, as Poets, and as Painters*.” Perhaps, in addition, he may have done some local thing about “Roman Remains,” and so got for himself the credit of knowing something about archaeology. At any rate, supposing the last surmise to be the truth, when he left the old country for this new country, he brought with him, in all probability, a reputation. Nobody could say exactly why he possessed the reputation, for, though books had been written of which he was presumedly the author, nobody ever met anybody else who had read the books.’

Touchstone replied in its second issue, 9 October, with an attack on Clarke as ‘The Literary Cad’. Its authorship has been attributed to Neild by Harold Love and to Kendall by Michael Ackland. The *Weekly Times* joined in, 16 October, with an attack by its columnist Figaro on Clarke – as ‘Exquisite’ – along with other drama critics. *Touchstone* continued to snipe at Clarke through 1869 and the following year, referring to the Peripatetic Philosopher as the Perambulating Popinjay.

In December 1869 Neild and Smith made a strategic peace in an exchange of letters, now in Mitchell Library. Lurline Stuart quotes Neild: ‘Your letter gave me infinite pleasure, but at the same time suggested many regrets that for eleven years I have gone on misunderstanding you for lack of a little explanation ... Your reply has brought me sunshine and I trust there will never be darkness again.’ 24 February 1870 Neild wrote to Smith agreeing to write drama criticism for *The Australasian*. Smith had been appointed editor that month.



Kendall continued to write for *Humbug* for the rest of 1869, but his relationship with Clarke deteriorated. Clarke published a parody of Kendall in the issue of 24 November; it was anonymous, like all the contributions, and its authorship is not indicated in Clarke’s file of the magazine. Kendall continued to contribute. 15 December he wrote the first of a series of topical verses entitled ‘Every Week’, concluding:

I’ll wind up here. My editor’s a bear,
Who treats a fellow in a way that’s scurvy;
He pays me – what d’ye think? My answer’s solemn,
A note – a wretched one-pound-note – per column!

‘Every Week’ continued every week in *Humbug*, but only the first in the series is noted in Clarke’s file as by Kendall; the others are unattributed, though all appeared under the same pseudonym ‘Mopsus’ which Kendall had used in the *Sydney Punch* in 1867. From Kendall’s later statement about *Humbug* to James Smith that ‘I wrote for every number up to the last’ we may assume they were his work.

22 December, Clarke published in *Humbug* parodies he had written of Kendall, Gordon, Walstab, himself, and himself again as the Peripatetic Philosopher. They were reprinted, except for the Walstab, in the *Australian Journal* in January. The fact that Clarke parodied himself may

not have mitigated the offence in Kendall's eyes. Alcohol is a recurrent theme in the parodies of Kendall and Gordon – though not of the Peripatetic Philosopher.

GLYCERA

by H-N-Y K-ND-LL, ESQ.,

Author of *Gum Leaves*, etc., etc., etc.,

Glycera, my loved one, give me whiskey over proof,
 In the moonless, mild mid-winters, when the rain is on the roof.
 You that love, and you that listen, black in breaths of stormy straits,
 Drift with me to death's division, driven by the fierce-eyed fates;
 This, and this, you have to reckon, when the wind on window beats,
 And the little schoolboys trembling put their heads beneath the sheets;
 When from out his chamber leaning, he, the lord of lyre and lute,
 Sees thee strolling after dinner through deep gardens flushed with fruit,
 And with all the might of Bacchus, furious from the forest fine,
 Drains a most tremendous beaker of the worst colonial wine ...
 Now I burn, and now I shiver, O Jerusalem, it's nice!
 Now I feel the poet's passion, in the days that used to be,
 When the west wind wildly warbling sighed its sorrow to the sea.

'Mark Clancy's Leap by A. L. G-RD-N, ESQ., Author of *Sea Sickness*, *Tobacco Smoke*, *Astarte*, etc., etc.' similarly inhabits a world of alcoholic haze.

'Come hither, come hither, my little foot-page, and tighten the girths for me;
 But never a word said the little foot-page as he louted low on his knee;
 For he had drunk of the wine of the foaming Rhine, and was very far gone on the spree.

It concludes:

They picked up his body when morning dawned, but there wasn't a sign of his soul.
 And the drunken old porter, he said to his daughter, as he scratched his obfuscated poll,
 'Here's some poor wight has got tight over night, and has broken his neck in a hole.'

The parodies need not necessarily be taken as hostile in intention. They can be seen as part of Clarke's promotional campaign for the new Australian literature he was actively boosting, like the praise for Gordon's poetry in the *Colonial Monthly* of December 1868. Praise was important, but parody also carried something implicitly stronger than praise. Parody implied that the subjects were sufficiently eminent for a parody to have some point, the writers well enough known for the parody to be recognized. The very fact of parody declared that the subjects were literary celebrities. Kendall, however, had no wish to be well-known for his drinking propensities and his relationship with Clarke soured. What Gordon felt about the parody of his verse is unknown.

As well as writing for *Humbug* Kendall had obtained further freelance work. The publisher W. H. Williams appointed him editor of *Williams's Illustrated Australian Annual for Christmas and the New Year 1869–70*. In the inaugural annual the previous year he had won the prize poetry competition, and Clarke had been a fellow contributor. Neither Clarke nor Gordon appeared in the volume that Kendall edited, though there were contributions from McCrae, Walstab, Evelyn (George Oakley), James Smith, and Kendall himself with 'Orara: a Fragment' and 'The Native Wren'.

'The Native Wren' was set to music by Joseph Summers. W. H. Williams wrote: 'As the origin of this song may be of interest to our readers, we will state it. The publisher of the *Australian Annual*, together with one of the principal contributors to it, made a trip to Lilydale on last New Year's Day, and when ascending the high mountain, beyond which lies the Blackwood or Sassafras Gully, and the foot of which commences in the Running Creek (about five miles from Lilydale), was struck with the peculiarly sweet whistle of a bird, which was applied to, in strict time and the same pitch, by his fellow from the opposite side of the creek. To make no mistake, he took down the notes to the little melody, and at his request Mr Summers has reproduced it in the introduction and accompaniment to the above song, the words of which are by Mr Kendall. He must express his thanks to those gentlemen for the happy way in which they have produced the sentiments likely to be inspired by such a song in such a scene.'

4 December 1869 *The Australasian* published a poem by George Gordon McCrae, 'The Poet and the Muse', dedicated to Kendall. Kendall wrote to McCrae: 'Your poem in *The Australasian* is very beautiful. But what have I done to deserve the dedication?'



In the end, which wasn't long after the beginning, *Humbug* proved no more financially successful than the *Colonial Monthly*. Turner wrote in the *Melbourne Review*: 'As the field was already fully occupied by *Punch* and its then rival, *Touchstone*, it only lasted for a month or two, and died of an exhausted chest.' 5 January 1870, Clarke wrote a valedictory piece 'On the Pleasures of Editorship': 'It is a very fine thing, but it is rather expensive. For the last fifteen weeks I have been editing this respectable journal, and my experience is that editing as a business don't pay.'

'As I informed the no doubt intensely interested public some time ago, my habitual melancholy and an incurable tendency to spirituous liquors caused me to be selected from a host of claimants as the editor of the miserable rag you see before you.'

'The pay was to be unexceptional, and the work nominal, and I thought that I had dropped into a good thing.'

"'You must look over the MSS old fellow, arrange about the cartoon, and draw your 'screw.' It's as easy as lying."

'It wasn't by any means.'

'No, sir I was HAD! HAD emphatically in the biggest of possible print.'

‘It began all right. The screw was drawn with refreshing regularity, and the MSS were plentiful. I suppose I used up about three hundredweight of best paste in the first month. But by and by the contributors fell off. One went melancholy mad, and another took to the city missionary line of business. He said it paid him better than comic writing. I had to do all the MSS myself, and for some weeks used to write about five pages weekly of brilliant satire.’

It is not stated who it was who ‘went melancholy mad’ but Kendall might well have taken it to refer to him. Nor is it clear who were the friends who began to chip in with advice: ‘Then my friends used to make suggestions. One wanted a page of social chat spiced with Greek quotations; another said that unless I parodied a Spurgeon’s sermon every week, he wouldn’t subscribe; a third wanted “more conundrums” (insatiable beast!); and a fourth quarrelled with me because I wouldn’t go about in a buggy drawn by a pair of piebald jackasses, and distribute *gratis* copies in a blue tunic and a Roman helmet ...

‘When I refused to adopt these suggestions, my friends went away, and said that I was a most impracticable fellow, and confoundedly conceited into the bargain.

‘I suppose that, taking them all round, fair give and take, I have made at least nine deadly enemies, and sown the seeds of dissension in ninety hitherto happy families ...

‘I was told that no man ever conducted a comic journal successfully unless he was either a capitalist or an habitual drunkard. Nobody would lend me the money to become the former, so I made an attempt to become the latter, and brought on five useless fits of *delirium tremens* in consequence.’

It was clearly a ‘brilliant satire’ of the sort he congratulated himself on. No less clearly, it described an awful truth. Clarke had managed to make himself enemies. As Henry G. Turner recalled in the *Melbourne Review*: ‘He had an unhappy talent for alienating friends, and generally rendered the first breach irreparable by the caustic cynicism of his pen. Nevertheless, he retained some strong friendships to the day of his death, and in his impulsive way he gave his whole heart where it evoked a responsive feeling of regard.’

With the following issue, 12 January 1870, *Humbug* died. *Touchstone* ran a black-bordered death notice:

On the 13th inst. At 98 Little Collins St East
Of *morbis clerici*, aged 11 weeks,
HUMBUG
Country papers please copy

So quickly was I done for,
I wonder what I was begun for.

The next week, 22 January, *Touchstone* ran an obituary poem, also black-bordered, in the manner of Tom Hood’s ‘The Song of the Shirt’. The author was Kendall. But when visiting Clarke to borrow money, Kendall admitted to James Smith, ‘I was weak enough to imply that I was not the writer of the objectionable verses in *Touchstone*. The prevarication was wicked, though I sinned to save Clarke’s feelings.’ It is not known whether Clarke believed the denial.

One more Unfortunate,
 Hard up for breath,
 Rashly importunate,
 Come to its death?

(Shade of great Thomas,
 Pardon this 'borrow',
 Think of its promise
 And think of our sorrow).

Public, who laughed at it,
 Public, who scoffed at it,
 Scoffed a poor aper,
 Where are the brains of it?
 All that remains of it
 Now is – waste paper!

Think of its 'articles',
 Take them by particles,
 Bit after bit of them –
 Take the whole batter up,
 Churn us their 'satire' up,
 Show us the 'wit' of them?

Who was its father?
 Who was its editor?
 Had it subscribers? Or
 Had it a creditor?

Alas for the rarity
 Of asinine charity
 Under the sun!
 Oh, it was pitiful!
 In a whole city full
 Sale it had none ...



The *Colonial Monthly* published its last issue in January 1870, too. 'Above the average,' *The Argus* remarked of the issue, 5 January, 'particularly strong in poetical contributions.' It contained Kendall's 'At Her Window' illustrated by Carrington, Gordon's 'The Sick Stockrider,

By the author of *Ashtaroth* etc.’, a belated review of Clarke’s *Long Odds*, and Clarke’s story ‘The Acclimatised Sparrow’.

Clarke’s story related to a project to introduce sparrows, song birds, pheasants, angora goats and other European fauna and flora into the Australian bush and suburbs, noted in his *History of Australia* for the year 1857: ‘This year was founded in Melbourne an Acclimatisation Society. The idea originated with Mr Edward Wilson, one of the proprietors of *The Argus* newspaper, to whose zeal and energy it principally owes its success, and to the first President, Dr Thomas Black.’ The society denied responsibility for the rabbits and foxes that had been introduced.

Clarke’s story recounts how the ‘Tweet-tweet’ of a sparrow brings happy memories of England to a dying migrant. It was reprinted in *The Australasian*, 29 January. Gordon’s ‘The Sick Stockrider’ was reprinted in *The Australasian*, 15 January. Together the two pieces had provided a fitting elegiac note for the end of the *Colonial Monthly*. Reprinted they gained a readership the *Monthly*’s circulation had never attained.

Sir Frank Madden, who later became Speaker of the parliament of Victoria, and no doubt had his own ideas about public speaking, recalled in Humphris and Sladen: ‘Gordon could not recite even his own poetry, and often brought me the drafts of poems to read over and recite to him. When he brought the rough draft of “The Sick Stockrider,” I begged that he would let me have it for a few hours to enable me to master its beauty and enable me to speak it to the best of my ability. When I recited it to him he was greatly pleased, although he altered some of the lines.’

Harry Chaplin published McCrae’s recollection in *A McCrae Miscellany*: “‘The Sick Stockrider’ with which the *Bush Ballads* opens Gordon once recited to me from the original MS. This and “The Romance of Britomarte” and the very tone in which they were delivered remain with me to the present time.’

Gordon’s poem was published minus its concluding verse. Sutherland writes in Turner and Sutherland: ‘It was a pity that, ere printing this poem, he yielded to the suggestion made by one of his acquaintances of the *Colonial Monthly* staff to omit the last verse from his manuscript copy.

‘This verse has been preserved for us by the good taste of Mr J. J. Shillinglaw, who was present when the matter was discussed. There can be no doubt that it makes a less conclusive ending to the poem; but Gordon’s own instinct was right. As the piece ends now, it has a melodramatic ring; its sentiment hovers dangerously near a suspicion of fudge, and the four lines that have been dropped out came as a corrective, restoring the stockrider, after his little outburst of girlish tenderness, not at all unnatural even in a rough bushman, to the strong impression of suffering manfulness with which the piece opens. But it is possible that the poet felt how in this last quatrain he is laying bare his own heart for critical inspection, and withdrew the lines which his own artistic taste would otherwise have retained.’

Robb notes that George Gordon McCrae sent the omitted lines to Douglas Sladen, who was editing *Australian Poets 1788–1888*: ‘I send you a verse I got from my friend John Shillinglaw, who, like myself, was a friend of Gordon. I cannot conceive why Gordon should have cut out this concluding verse, as it seems to my mind to confer a completeness upon the whole that would be

wanting without.’ McCrae copied the missing verse into his copy of *Bush Ballads and Galloping Rhymes*, preserved in Fisher Library, University of Sydney.

As it was published, the poem ended:

Should the sturdy station children pull the bush flowers on my grave,
I may chance to hear them romping overhead.

The deleted final stanza continued:

I don’t suppose I shall, though, for I feel like sleeping sound,
That sleep they say is doubtful. True, but yet
At least it makes no difference to the dead man underground
What the living men remember or forget.
Enigmas that perplex us in the world’s unequal strife,
The future may ignore or may reveal
Yet some, as weak as water, Ned! To make the best of life,
Have been, to face the worst, as true as steel.

Gordon wrote to John Riddoch, 17 January: ‘Bye-the-bye did you like those verses of mine, “The Stockrider”? It was written at Yallum where I think you saw the manuscript – in fact, I think it is there now. I mention this because they made quite a stir here, and were copied into *The Australasian* and spoken of with praise. I don’t think much of them myself.’

In his preface to Gordon’s poems Clarke wrote: ‘in such poems as the ‘Sick Stockrider’ we perceive the genuine poetic instinct united to a very clear perception of the loveliness of duty and of labour. This is genuine, he stressed. The writer has ridden his ride as well as written it.’

It rapidly became one of Gordon’s – indeed, Australia’s – most popular poems. W. H. Wilde concluded his study of Gordon a century later: ‘He was the first of Australia’s literary balladists – “The Sick Stockrider” was clearly the one poem from which the ensuing hosts of bush ballads derived. His poem contained in it the beginning of the story of Australian bush life. The balladists who came after him, crowding the Literary Pages of the 1880s and 1890s, took up and amplified the story ... The lament of the dying stockman, however, will always mark the moment when the literature of this country began to move in a new and more characteristically Australian direction.’



1870 saw Kendall, without any assured, regular income, sinking into poverty and desperation. Charlotte Kendall told Sutherland, 6 September 1882: ‘We lived in Carlton near the Park, afterwards we removed to Fitzroy, then to Collingwood; after a short time we went to Richmond.’ In Turner and Sutherland Sutherland describes the circumstances of this time: ‘Meantime poverty, disappointment, and anxiety wrought an unutterable depression, and slowly the good resolves all melted away. He grew more and more unsteady, became less capable of work, and drifted rapidly into squalor. The wretched family hid their heads in a dingy lane of Richmond, while the poet, whose soul but five years earlier had been aglow with high ideals, and a love for

all that is beautiful and mysterious in nature, spent his evenings in obscure public-houses, and his nights too often seated in some lane or right-of-way.

‘Eight years later, when the fierce, foul dream of this time had spent its force, and give place to a long, slow remorseful time of quietness, he wrote of himself:

Have I no word at all for him
Who used down fetid lanes to slink,
And squat in tap-room corners grim,
And drown his thoughts in dregs of drink?

This much I’ll say, that when the flame
Of reason re-assumed its force,
The hell the Christian fears to name
Was Heaven to his fierce remorse.’

‘On a Street – a Life Picture – specially written for this journal by Henry Kendall’ was published in the *Town and Country Journal*, 12 April 1879, but not collected by Kendall.



January 1870 Walter Montgomery finally left Australia for England. In *My Father and My Father’s Friends* Hugh McCrae recalls that Montgomery sent for his horse Tudor, and, presenting him with a lump of sugar, shot him through the head.

Overworked and stressed, Clarke was now advised by his doctor to take a holiday. Dr Cannabis, one presumes. Mackinnon writes: ‘Soon after this time overwork had told its tale upon the restless brain, and the doctors ordered change of air to the more salubrious climate of Tasmania. But as funds were, as usual with him, decidedly short, how was the change to be effected?’

The printer and publisher of the *Australian Journal* recalled the solution forty years later in ‘A Master Printer. Fifty Years in Business. Mr A. H. Massina,’ in the *Herald*, 2 March 1909. Massina recalled: ‘Clarke came to me one day and said, “Massina, I want £50.”

““Oh,” I said, “You’ve had enough out of me. What more do you want?”

““£50,” replied Clarke, “I can write a story for your journal. I am going to Tasmania to write up the criminal records and I’ll do the story for one hundred pounds.”

‘We jumped at it.’

Campbell comments in his history of Massina’s: ‘It would be interesting to know the amount the author actually received for the serial rights – whether the original hundred pounds with which it is said Massina subsidized him covered the whole story, or whether he received additional “refreshers” later.’

Clarke may already have arranged for the *Argus* group, with its associated weekly *The Australasian*, to help finance the holiday by a journalistic assignment ‘to write up the criminal

records'. Fellow Yorick member F. W. Haddon, the editor of *The Argus*, had visited Tasmania the previous January. Now he went there again with Clarke.

Clarke had written on low life and night life and the margins of society in his three 'Night Scenes in Melbourne' in *The Argus* in 1868 and in his six-part 'Lower Bohemia' in *The Australasian* in 1869. An extension into the convict records was natural and appropriate. Or could be presented as so. Victoria, unlike Tasmania and New South Wales, had not been a transportation settlement, though a number of convicts had eventually come there after completing their sentence. And Clarke's cousin Andrew had spent six years in Tasmania, as private secretary to the Governor of Van Diemen's Land and as superintendent of convict labour in Hobart. Annie Baxter Dawbin mentions him in her diary a number of times. It is not known whether Andrew ever discussed his years in Australia with the young Marcus in England.



Clarke and Haddon arrived in Launceston on 21 January 1870. On 26 January, Foundation Day, they visited Port Arthur. The trip is described in a series of three articles Clarke wrote for *The Argus* three years later, 3, 12 and 26 July 1873, when the prison was closed down.

"You will find it difficult to get down to Port Arthur unless you've got friends there!" said the genial but imperative landlady of the Ark Hotel. "Of course, I mean friends in the *Government*," she added, seeing that I looked askance.

'We had friends in the Government, for Hacker, my companion, was a man of mark at the office of the *Peacock* and had hinted vaguely of columns of lead minion to be supplied by my eminent hand.'

Clarke's account of his visit captures the horror of the place: 'To me, brooding over stories of misery and crime, sitting beside the ironed convicts, and shivering at the chill breeze which whitened the angry waters of the bay, there was no beauty in those desolate cliffs, no cheering picturesqueness in that frowning shore. I saw Port Arthur for the first time beneath a leaden and sullen sky; and as we sailed inwards past the ruins of Point Puer, and beheld barring our passage to the prison the low grey hummocks of the Island of the Dead, I felt that there was a grim propriety in the melancholy of nature. '

He continued: 'I know that I thought to myself that I should go mad were I condemned to such a life, and that I caught one of the men looking at me with a broad grin as I thought it. I know that there seemed to me to hang over the whole place a sort of horrible gloom, as though the sunlight had been withdrawn from it, and that I should have been ashamed to have suddenly met some high-minded friend, inasmuch as it seemed that in coming down to stare at these chained and degraded beings, we had all been guilty of an unmanly curiosity.'

There were still some 574 inmates – convicts, invalids and insane at Port Arthur. Looking through the records Clarke asked to see one of them, transported for poaching when he was thirteen: 'The warder drew aside a peep-hole in the barred door, and I saw a grizzled, gaunt and half-naked old man coiled in a corner. The peculiar wild-beast smell which belongs to some

forms of furious madness exhaled from the cell. The gibbering animal within turned, and his malignant eyes met mine.

“Take care,” said the gaoler; “he has a habit of sticking his finger through the peep-hole to try and poke someone’s eye out!”

‘I drew back, and a nail-bitten hairy finger, like the toe of an ape, was thrust with rapid and simian neatness through the aperture.

“That is how he amuses himself,” said the good warder, forcing-to the iron slot; “he’d best be dead, I’m thinking.”“

The experience was a horrifying one; the library researches Clarke made through the published records were no less so. He writes: ‘In the folio reports of the House of Commons can be read statements which make one turn sick with disgust, and flush hot with indignation. Officialdom, with its crew of parasites and lickspittles, may try to palliate the enormities committed in the years gone by; may revile, with such powers of abuse as are given to it the writers who record the facts which it blushes for; but the sad grim truth remains. For half a century the law allowed the vagabonds and criminals of England to be subjected to a lingering torment, to a hideous debasement, to a monstrous system of punishment futile for good and horribly powerful for evil.’

Turner commented in the *Melbourne Review*: ‘The examination of the official registers of the prison settlement – the bare lists of *authorized* punishments, the dealings with “refractories,” the outbreaks, the executions – was a long task, distasteful enough to most men, but possessing a strange fascination for him, and revealing conditions of unspeakable horror, such as he assured some of his friends he dared not commit to print.’



Clarke’s writing up of the criminal records, ‘Old Stories Retold’, duly began in *The Australasian* on 19 February 1870 and continued, on and off, through fourteen stories, some in multiple episodes, till 24 June the following year.

25 February 1870 *The Argus* reported: ‘We understand that the proprietors of the *Australian Journal* have purchased from Mr Marcus Clarke, the author of *Long Odds*, a new novel, entitled *His Natural Life*, for publication in that periodical. *His Natural Life* is a colonial story, and is intended, we believe, to illustrate the evils of the old transportation system. The first instalment will appear in the next (March) number of the *Australian Journal*.’ *The Argus* continued to note the progress of the serial as the months succeeded. Clarke was developing his promotional skills.

The January *Australian Journal* announced the forthcoming serial and reprinted Clarke’s parodies of Kendall, Gordon and the Peripatetic Philosopher from *Humbug*. The February issue reprinted a couple more of Clarke’s *Humbug* contributions, ‘Swearing Off’ and ‘Our Glorious Climate’. Then in March Clarke’s installation as editor was announced, and he began serializing *His Natural Life*. It was illustrated by T. S. Cousins.

Clarke had somehow contrived to fall on his feet again, leaping from the ailing *Colonial Monthly* to *Humbug*, and from the dying *Humbug* to the *Australian Journal*. Clarson, Massina &

Co. were printer and publisher of all three journals at one time or another. If and when and to what degree they had been financing *Humbug*, and to what degree it was Clarke's responsibility is unclear. They had full financial control of the *Australian Journal* and still had faith in Marcus when they appointed him editor – or conductor, as they later described his role.

Massina recalled the circumstances: 'On one occasion we determined to improve the *Australian Journal*. We hit upon Marcus Clarke to give the "boost" we had in mind. He ran it for a month, during which time the circulation dropped from 12,000 to 4,000. If we had run it for another month it would have been dead.'

A decline of 8000 copies in a month seems in excess of anything even Clarke could have achieved. Possibly it is a mistake for a year. Or even eighteen months. By which time Clarke had surrendered the editorship. But that was all in the future. In which the *Australian Journal* continued, surviving until April 1962. It was, Ronald Campbell noted, 'the oldest monthly publication in Australia, and one of the oldest in the world. In the British Empire, only *Chambers' Journal* and *Blackwood's* have had a longer continuous existence.'

As for *His Natural Life*, A. H. Massina recalled: 'Now Clarke was going to write that story in twelve monthly sections. At first he wrote enough for two months, then enough for one month, and got down to very little. In fact we had once to put it in pica type, instead of brevier to swell out the size of that month's contribution. But on one occasion he had nothing ready and we had to go to press with an apology to our readers. Finally we had to lock him in a room to get his matter written.'

It was not a harsh imprisonment according to Mackinnon: 'Under the benign influences of a pipe, &c, &c., and a lock on the door, the necessary work would be done by the facile pen.' Campbell remarks: 'Clearly he must have been working at the *Journal* office, or it would have been very difficult to get hold of him in order to lock him up, as it is scarcely likely that his home would have been invaded for the purpose! It is equally improbable that, at his age, he would have been as addicted to whisky as the story suggests. It is not unreasonable to assume that for a considerable time during the run of *His Natural Life* Clarke was working at the *Journal* office in some kind of editorial capacity, and that – perhaps in consequence of being locked in his office! – he left it in September, 1871.'

And so *His Natural Life* came into being, ultimately running for twenty-seven episodes, instead of the originally agreed upon twelve.



Kendall was now renting a tiny cottage in Swan Street, Richmond. Massina had built or bought a house there, at 231 Swan Street, in 1864; unlike Kendall, he owned the property and also had a country home at Wandering.

Shillinglaw's papers in the State Library of Victoria contain a number of letters from Kendall at this time: 'Can you possibly raise a pound for me today? I am sick of "dunning" *Punch*, and I am pretty sure that poor Clarke is hard up.'

‘You know, my dear boy, that I would not bother you if I could help myself. But we are without a penny at home, and being strangers are also without trust.’

Kendall added a postscript: ‘I am in *Punch* office. If you can’t do a note try to manage ten shillings. Mrs K is in town waiting for money to carry on the house with. I haven’t got the face to apply to you personally.’

Kendall wrote again to Shillinglaw, 20 January 1870: ‘You had better strike my name out of your list of contributors for next month. I have a sick house, no money, and no spirits to scribble.’

But there was no next month for the *Colonial Monthly*. January had seen its last issue.

The following day Kendall called on Shillinglaw and received £5, writing out a receipt discharging Shillinglaw from all previous claims Kendall might have on the *Colonial Monthly*.

There is another letter to Shillinglaw from the Yorick Club: ‘Monday afternoon.

‘I am waiting, my boy, for a reply to this. I must raise five shillings for a prescription by hook or by crook. Will you give me the same? Baby is in an almost dying state. Answer by bearer.’

On 2 February 1870 at Swan Street, Richmond, Kendall’s daughter Araluen died from dental fever aggravated by malnutrition. Kendall did not have sufficient money for the funeral expenses. Charlotte Kendall wrote to Sutherland, 22 August 1882: ‘His little girl’s death (Araluen) was a great shock to him. She was our first-born and very intelligent. Dr Neild who attended her spoke of her as being a pocket edition of her father, so like him in features and expression.’ Charlotte wrote to Sutherland, 6 September 1882: ‘The wailing voice of the child before her death seemed to haunt him ever afterwards – *she suffered so*.’ In ‘Henry Kendall: A Study in Imagery’ Donovan Clarke remarks on Kendall’s later ‘persecution mania, his delusion that he was being accused of the murder of his daughter Araluen.’ Kendall felt that her death was a result of his inability to earn enough to care for her properly. Years later in 1879 Kendall wrote in ‘On a Street’:

I only hear the brutal curse
Of landlord clamouring for his pay,
And yonder is the pauper’s hearse
That comes to take a child away.

Apart, and with the half-grey head
Of sudden age, again I see
The father writing by the dead
To earn the undertaker’s fee.

And in the poem ‘Araluen’ in the same year he wrote of the grief his wife suffered:

You that sit and sob beside me – you upon whose golden head
Many rains of many sorrows have from day to day been shed;
Who, because your love was noble, faced with me the lot austere
Ever pressing with its hardship on the man of letters here –
Let me feel that you are near me, lay your hand within mine own;
You are all I have to live for, now that we are left alone.

Three there were, but one has vanished. Sins of mine have made you weep;
But forgive your baby's father now that baby is asleep.

Araluen is buried in the Melbourne General Cemetery. A memorial stone was erected by the Australian Literature Society in 1927.



In 1870, Johnson writes in *Laughter and the Love of Friends*, the Yorick Club treasurer posted a list on the noticeboard of those behind in their subscriptions. Alongside Clarke's name someone inserted four exclamation marks.

Gordon wrote in the suggestion book: 'The person who put four notes of admiration opposite the name of Mr Marcus Clarke in the notice of the Treasurer this day with regard to nonpayment ought to be kick'd. Adam Lindsay Gordon. 8 February 1870.'

Kendall added his signature below Gordon's. So did D. D. Wheeler, remarking: 'I think so too.' W. McKinley commented: 'I venture to suggest that Mr Kendall, Mr Gordon and Mr Wheeler might perform the operation alluded to without the assistance of the committee.'

Financial embarrassment was widespread. There was a complex dispute between Kendall, Clarke and Shillinglaw. Kendall had become ambivalent, if not downright hostile, towards Clarke by this time. There is an undated letter to Neild enigmatically alluding to some dispute: 'Don't breathe a word of what Mrs Kendall injudiciously said in reference to Clarke. I feel sure that the oversight of Clarke has arisen out of forgetfulness.'

Kendall wrote a long letter to James Smith, who since February 1870 had been editor of *The Australasian*. Kendall confessed to mistakes he had recently committed in regard to Clarke, whom Smith disliked, and went on to describe their relationship in full. They had not met until Kendall arrived in Melbourne.

'As proprietor of the *Colonial Monthly* he owed me some money which was paid on my application for it. Hearing from him that he was not "making a fortune out of the magazine," I offered to write in future for nothing, but he refused to entertain the proposal, stating that, as he was paying others, he would pay me. Subsequently I wrote for several numbers, but received remuneration for one of my articles only. However I did not ask him for anything, and when the monthly passed from his hands, I told Clarson that I did not wish to make a claim against Clarke so the matter dropped.'

Some time later Neild told Clarke that Kendall was desperately hard up and Clarke 'very generously offered me the use of £5. He said I could work the sum off in *Humbug*, and I *did* so. When that journal passed into his own hands, Massina informed me that Clarke could never carry it on without literary assistance on the part of his contributors. I at once wrote to Clarke offering to write on for nothing till he was able to pay. His answer was verbal, and its effect was that "there was a man in the background finding the money and that the coin was all right." But the statement was not true ...' Kendall claimed that he was the only one of Clarke's old contributors who stuck by him. 'I wrote for every number up to the last. At one time Mr Carrington of *Punch*

who had heard somewhere that *Humbug* was not paying me, asked me to write my “Mopsus” articles for his journal.’ Kendall ‘called on Clarke, and put the matter to him. He then made me a statement that *Humbug* had been subsidized and that I would henceforth be paid regularly.’ So Kendall declined Carrington’s offer, and lost the *Punch* work. As for Clarke’s statement, ‘it was like all his former ones untrue.’

On Clarke’s return from Tasmania, Kendall wrote to him ‘telling him of the sickness of our child and asking him to let me have 30 shillings or £2. He did not answer me. I had often written to him before for a little cash on account but as a rule my letters were snubbed with silence ... On a day when he knew that our child was lying dead at home, he wrote me two letters that were brutal. He wound up by asking me to furnish my account, promising to “send his cheque” for the whole by return post. The cause of his anger was a lie told by that unprincipled blackguard Shillinglaw. On the receipt of the second missive, I went to S., called him a liar, and then posted off to Clarke’s own house. There I gave him a written denial of Shillinglaw’s lie; and he nominated £5 as the sum owing to me. He really owed much more, but I was too ill at the time to dispute over it ...’ Kendall was to get the cheque next day but it didn’t come though. He waited for a week and then wrote asking for £1 or so on account but, he told Smith, there was no reply.’

Kendall then turned ‘to the period of my mad mistakes. You recollect that night Mrs Kendall called upon you for an advance which you were not able to give. I was sick and penniless, we were bound to move out of the house by 12 the next day, the boots were nearly off my feet, and Mrs Kendall was without the materials for necessary mourning apparel.’

‘Half-insane at our plight,’ he told Smith, he called on Hugh George at *The Argus*.

‘I asked him if it were in his power as manager to advance me £2 on a review that I intended to offer *The Argus*. He said it was not. Driven to the wall as it were I mentioned in a delicate way Clarke’s debt saying I expected payment that day. Then Mr George offered to give me £2 in return for an order on Clarke ... I wrote to Clarke on the matter, and I believe he met the order. I wanted £4 in all and Mrs Kendall thought of Brough Smyth who had always expressed himself as willing to give me assistance. Not knowing the nature of my transaction with George, she asked Smyth to lend me £2 and obtained from me an order on Clarke which Mr Smyth promised not to present or speak about. During the next week Clarke paid by instalments of £3 the rest of the £5 originally due, but I was weak enough to keep the sums so received intending however to pay Smyth out of the sum I am to get for the words of the forthcoming cantata by Horsley.’

Inevitably, Brough Smyth met Clarke and the whole story came out.



Seven years later, 5 August 1876, Kendall wrote to J. Sheridan Moore: ‘Your inquiry as to my Melbourne career shall be satisfied. I was on the staff of *The Australasian* for eighteen months. Many of its reviews were written by me. I also wrote occasional reviews and sketches for *The Argus*. During the same time, I was a principal contributor to *Melbourne Punch* – receiving indeed a larger remuneration for my work than any other contributor. In addition to this, I wrote occasional leaders for the Melbourne *Daily Telegraph*, and Melbourne *Evening Herald*. In

conjunction with Marcus Clarke I edited *Humbug* reputed to be the most brilliant satirical paper ever published in Victoria. I also was, for a short time, the editor of *Touchstone*: a paper got up by Mr James Smith – the then editor of *The Australasian* ... For three months I edited that best of Australian magazines, the *Colonial Monthly* ... You can see by this that I held my own in Victoria; and only went to the wall afterwards through sheer over-work.'

It all seems rather exaggerated. The whole project of going to Melbourne to live as a writer was misguided. Clarke as a prose writer barely managed to survive as a journalist; there was little hope for poets like Gordon and Kendall. There is no doubt that Kendall was going through a very difficult time. But he did what he could. He seems to have worked with Clarke on *Humbug* and with Shillinglaw on the *Colonial Monthly*. But the *Telegraph* leaders, he wrote to Lynch, 2 October 1869, lasted only while one of the regular men was ill. He might have helped on *Touchstone* when its editor, James Smith, became editor of *The Australasian* in February. But as for his claim to have been on the staff of *The Australasian* for eighteen months, there is no evidence that he was ever formally employed, though he was an occasional freelance contributor. Even that role was sporadic; in 1869 *The Australasian* seems to have published some sixteen poems but only two prose pieces by him. After August he published nothing there for the rest of the year. Possibly he was busy working editorially on the *Colonial Monthly* and *Humbug*. 1 January 1870 the *Australian* published his essay on Sir Thomas Browne's *Religio Medici* and *Urn Burial* but after that there seems to have been nothing for four months.

Kendall wrote to Smith on 4 March 1870, using *Melbourne Punch* letterhead notepaper: 'About a week ago, Dr Neild suggested that I might with great hope apply to you for some employment on *The Australasian*; but delicacy has prevented me from doing so hitherto. As things are looking worse than ever, I am now compelled to throw aside that delicacy. Can you give me anything to do? Since my first contributions to *The Australasian*, I have had the training necessary for an "all round" writer. I have written "topics," leading articles, "subs," sketches, etc which have been used by journals of a somewhat eclectic character; and I may add that in one case, you yourself pointed to my paper as "being written in an excellent spirit."

'A few weeks ago, you intimated that I might write a sketch for *The Australasian*. I did so, but a remark from Mr Bright hindered me from sending it in.

'I feel sure that I could write reviews of books on aesthetical subjects fully up to the tone of most that I have met with in the colonies. As to "sketches," I can do them, but they are not in my line. But my latest attempt even in this direction is far and away better than its predecessors.

'I confess that this application is made without much hope. Not that I doubt your good feeling; but the fact is, I have met with so many disappointments lately, that I have come to expect nothing else.

'I do not [know] why it is I am so unsuccessful. I neither drink, knock about theatres, or fail in my engagements as a writer. And finally, I have been accredited with some literary ability.'

A note at the top of the letter added: 'I am paying off your advance by instalments. A memo left at *Touchstone* will find me.'

Charlotte wrote to Sutherland, 6 September 1882: 'His experience of press life was not pleasant; he often used to say that Dr Woolley of the Sydney University told him often never to depend on the press for a living, as it would be a failure. On one occasion, we were very poor and Mr Kendall wrote a review for *The Australasian* in Melbourne. Mr J. Smith was the editor. He told me that if Mr Kendall would only write something of a "business" character it would be better – a similar answer given to me by the editor of the *Town and Country Journal* in Sydney. You can judge for yourself whether he met with any encouragement. Of course they would all take his writings for nothing, but we wanted money.'

Smith published seven prose pieces of Kendall's in *The Australasian* in the following months, beginning with an article on 'The Great Clarence River Flood' on 2 April, and a review of Tennyson's *The Holy Grail* on 30 April: 'the completion of the greatest poetical enterprise ever attempted since Milton ... The fact that 30,000 copies of *The Holy Grail* were sold on its first appearance is the best proof that the laureate has lost none of his popularity.' A couple of travel articles followed, 'A Cruise Amongst the South Sea Islands' on 7 May and 'The Antarctic Continent' on 28 May, and then three more literary articles – a review of Gordon's *Bush Ballads and Galloping Rhymes* on 25 June, 'The Courtly Poets' on 9 July, and 'Rossetti's Poetry' on 23 July. There may, of course, be unsigned contributions that have not been identified.

Something from Kendall had also appeared in the *Australian Journal* every month from July 1869 through to March 1870 (except for January, which ran the parody 'Glycera'). With Clarke's appointment as editor in March there was a break, and nothing of Kendall's appeared in April or May. But the rift between them must have been to some degree mended, and from June through to December Kendall once again had a contribution published in the *Journal* each month.



9 March 1870 Gordon wrote to John Riddoch: 'I have given up expecting you for some time and almost despair of hearing from you. Mrs Gordon has been ill but is rather better. We got a telegram from Young at Robe yesterday to say her father is dying or dangerously ill and is exceedingly anxious to see her. So worded I could ill spare her just now of all times but I let her go and is just gone on board the *Penola* so I shall be left alone a time.'

Major Baker had told Gordon that the solicitors England and Stewart were 'very confident' about his claim on Esslemont. Sutherland in Turner and Sutherland quotes Gordon as writing: 'My title seems clear enough. All that the other side have to go upon is an Act of 1848 which made entailed estates subject to the debt bonds of the holders. Stewart has gone over the papers and believes that they are wrong. However, the news by the next mail ought to put the matter straight.'

'However,' he told Riddoch, 'I take little personal comfort from the hopes of the property. It will come too late in the day to do me any good; and I am growing sick of everything.'

'Having more money than you know what to do with is only a little better than having none and wanting it.'

Wanting money, Gordon raced again. Sutherland writes: 'in order to raise a little ready cash for pocket money, he accepted an offer to ride one last race. It was to be on Major Baker's big black horse Prince Rupert, on the afternoon of Saturday 12 March 1870.' Edith Humphris cites Etienne de Mestre's recollection of some forty years later that Gordon's friends stationed themselves at different parts of the course so as to be ready in case he came to grief. And come to grief he did.

The Argus reported, 14 March 1870: 'Going up to the log fence, Mr Gordon had a slight lead, the Dutchman taking third place, Skipper and Curryong being close behind. At the next jump, Prince Rupert made a bad blunder, and threw Mr Gordon nearly over his head, but he made a capital recovery, and was soon in the saddle again without losing any ground. He maintained the lead along the other side of the course until nearing the abattoirs, when he was passed by the Dutchman and Reindeer. The latter took the lead for a short distance, but was soon passed by the Dutchman. At the third fence from the stand Prince Rupert fell, and got away from Mr Gordon. A splendid race home ensued between Dutchman and Reindeer, in which both horses were splendidly handled. Mr Mount had a slight lead at the second fence from home, but on coming to the hurdle Mr Moran shook his whip at the Dutchman, who answered in the gamest manner.'

Five days later, 17 March, Gordon wrote to Riddoch: 'I got your letter this morning. I should have answered it before, but I have been bad. I got a very bad fall last Saturday; worse than usual, in fact, and I have not been able to do anything. Blackmore, who is out here now, got me to Brighton that night. On Monday Baker brought me into town to see the doctor, but as I was there by myself I did not care much either way. I am up today, for the truth is I should croak if I had to stay in bed any longer. I can't lie and think, and I can't sleep. I don't think I shall get over this fall easily, and you know, old fellow, I'm not likely to complain more than need be; but I am hurt inside somewhere, I think. Power wants to take me to Toorak tonight. Perhaps I may go, but am not sure.'

He lay in bed for five days. Sutherland quotes 'a private letter' from this time in the *Melbourne Review*, October 1883: 'I don't think I shall get over this fall easily, but whatever happens, if I get the Esslemont estate, all the back rents go to my wife.' Sutherland comments that, reaching back to 1864, 'the accrued rents of £2500 a year would leave his wife well provided for.'

McLaren quotes a letter Gordon wrote to his landlord, Kelly: 'I am going to Toorak tonight. I have been laid up or should have been out sooner. The doctors wouldn't let me out of bed till yesterday and then I got up on my own account – I enclose a few pounds the banks were shut today or I would have got some more [list of provisions] I have not heard from Mrs Gordon but have sent a telegraph.'

His financial problems were increasing. Hutton quotes a letter he wrote 21 March to his tenant at Mount Gambier, Doughty, for payment of his overdue rent: 'Would you be so kind as to send me a little money, I wouldn't ask you but I haven't a shilling now.'

Kendall wrote to Gordon from the Yorick Club, Friday 18th, presumably March 1870, if the reference to Gordon's being 'ill' refers to his fall. Ackland reprints it in his selection from Kendall.

'My Dear Gordon,

'Extreme trouble – the trouble of not knowing where to find the next day's meals, added to my own bad health – prevented me from writing to you when you were ill. Indeed I did not know of the fact until four days ago.

'With respect to the scandalous lies promulgated by Shillinglaw and Clarke, I was cheered to hear from Penny that you had defended me. He can tell you how I was served by the one, and Clarson can prove that Clarke has been a most unmitigated culprit in the matter. I have not been without sins myself but my sins have been those arising from desperation. A man who sees those dear to him faced with real want is not likely to be rational. The day baby died I had not a shilling to bury her with.

'I have no ill-feeling against anyone down here. When Clarke was abused in print, I took up the cudgels for him. When J.S.S. was hard up for copy, I gave the whole of my time and energy to secure it for him. When I felt sure that you had surpassed me on my own ground, I did not scruple to express my conviction verbally and in print. But nevertheless I have made enemies.

'Believe me to be

'Yours as ever,

'Henry Kendall

'I have been down with a confounded attack of bronchitis.'

Another letter to Gordon, reprinted by McLaren, is dated simply Yorick Club Saturday: 'You should have answered my note. I feel your silence very keenly. I suppose Shillinglaw and Clarke have been stuffing your ears with their lies. When I ascertain the exact nature of their calumny, I will expose both of them.

'Neild and Moloney would tell you how deeply I have been wronged by both Shillinglaw and Clarke.'

Kendall added a couple more sentences as a postscript: 'Sincere respect for your genius is the only impulse that has led me to write to you again. Your silence looks like an undeserved *slight*.'

But there were good things happening. 4 April 1870 *The Argus* reported: 'We are given to understand that the preliminary arrangements for the festival to inaugurate the opening of the new Town Hall have been commenced. Mr C. E. Horsley has received a commission from his worship the mayor to compose a cantata to a poem by Mr Henry Kendall for this important occasion, and the chief direction of the music will be placed in Mr Horsley's hands.'

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21 March 1870 Gordon wrote to John Riddoch: 'Would you be so kind as to send me a little money, I wouldn't ask you but I haven't a shilling just now. When Mrs Gordon was in Robe she wrote for money to come back and I had to borrow it. I ought to have told you of this when you were here but somehow I didn't get an opportunity, besides I had a few shillings then but I am in

rather a mess just now for I had a row with a Jew fellow to whom I owe a trifle and he is pushing me. When I had that document which Stewart sent home I spoke to a money-lender also a Jew and explained part of the story and showed what the document said and he offered to lend me some money which I should have taken perhaps but he wanted such tremendous interest that I refused. Still he must have thought the chance a good one or he would not have offered to lend me some money. I should not ask you for this if it was not a case of necessity in the first place and also if I were not sure that I could pay you this. As for the £200, that must stand, but what you give me now the rent will pay or if Lawson had claimed the rent (which I don't think he has) the property must fetch something more than the mortgage money.

'If I last I shall come into that place, I feel sure, but I could not stand going through the court or being otherwise exposed. If I've been a great ass I have gone through as much trouble in one way as I can bear. Indeed, had it not been for my wife I should have got out of my troubles somehow before this. I don't think the next world is worse than the present, and if I got a little more desperate I'm sure my wife would be better without me. You who are differently constituted altogether cannot perhaps understand how a man who has always been naturally reckless feels when he gets in a hole, especially if the man is also naturally vain. If I had just enough to keep my head above water now I can see my way to make a little, though I am not sure that I could do it. I find my head failing me sometimes, and cannot write sometimes when I want to do it. There is not much to be made with the pen, but I could have made something if I had not been worried so.'

He concluded with an anxious reiteration of his request: 'Please send me what I ask for soon like a good fellow. I ought to have written to you before this.'

Riddoch sent what was asked for. 3 April 1870 Gordon wrote thanking him: 'I got yours this afternoon for which accept best thanks. I managed to settle that matter which worried me most which I will explain by next mail. I have only time to catch this, I was not in town yesterday. I can assure you your cheque will be very acceptable. I will write at length to catch the next post.'



In *James Edward Neild: Victorian Virtuoso*, Harold Love records how squabbles continued to break out at the Yorick Club, with Neild protesting to the committee over Shillinglaw's behaviour to another member, Richard Leake. Joseph Johnson records that Leake, 'whilst delivering a letter to the Club, had the letter snatched from him and torn up by Shillinglaw, who shouted at him that "if I catch you coming up these stairs again, I'll tell the waiter to kick you down."' Shillinglaw refused to apologize. At a special meeting Neild moved and Carrington seconded a motion to expel him, which was defeated by fourteen votes to twelve. On other occasions, Johnson writes, Shillinglaw 'had to be disciplined for tearing some pages of Charles Bright's, with which he disagreed, out of the Notes and Queries Book; he had to be spoken to for sleeping all night at the Club in the company of Walstab, and interfering with the cleaning the next morning'. Johnson adds: 'At least he didn't go so far as journalist Montague Harvie, who was asked to resign after

persistently relieving himself out of the club window, to the consternation of the occupants of the building opposite – and, presumably, of pedestrians in the street below.’

At the same time, Lurline Stuart notes, there were tensions between Clarke and James Smith. 18 April 1870 *The Argus* reported on comments in the English press on Clarke’s first two books, *The Peripatetic Philosopher* and *Long Odds*: ‘The English press has been pleased to compliment the “Peripatetic Philosopher” of *The Australasian* in a way that must be gratifying to that gentleman’s well-known vanity. Several papers received by this mail contain favourable mention of his writing. *Public Opinion* characterizes the fragmentary essays as “full of point and cleverly humorous,” and says that “those who read them will be glad to have met a writer whose humour is as original as his style is sparkling and wonderful;” while the *European Mail* observes that “it is not a little to the credit of ‘Q’ that, week after week, he has been able to keep up the sparkle of his papers.” We may congratulate Mr Marcus Clarke on the favourable reception of his first novel, *Long Odds*, by the English press. The *European Mail* says that “the book is one of the most entertaining and brilliantly written novels we have ever read,” and the *Spectator* concludes a long and critical review in which Mr Clarke’s many and obvious sins of commission and imitation are unsparingly commented on, by saying that “there is much that is readable in the book,” and that, “while the plot might have turned on a more moral and less unhealthy subject than combined bigamy and seduction, the writing shows talent, and gives promise of better things.” We hope it does.’ 23 April Clarke responded in the ‘Peripatetic Philosopher’ to the reference to his ‘well-known vanity’ in a relaxed sort of way, remarking that *The Argus* writer was not free from a similar charge himself.

As well as negative comment, Smith had the weapon of suppression. No mention appeared in *The Australasian* of Clarke’s *His Natural Life*, which had begun serialization in the *Australian Journal* in March. Clarson, Massina & Co. complained to *The Argus* proprietors early in June that ‘the editor of *The Australasian* was prejudiced against their publication because their leading story was contributed by a writer with whom he is personally unfriendly’. Lurline Stuart quotes a rebuke in *James Smith* from the manager of *The Argus*, Hugh George, to Smith: ‘You have made a mistake, inasmuch as you have acted contrary to the well-known principles upon which the editorial function should be discharged.’



Gordon was now involved in preparing for publication a collection of the poems he had been writing. His correspondence with John Riddoch begins to turn on literary issues, supplementing the usual topics of horses, money and the Esslemont inheritance. 3 April he wrote: ‘I enclose you a letter of Kendall’s (in fact two, as I have them both by me). He is *reckoned* the best critic of poetry here, and he is certainly the best poet. A. C. Swinburne has sent him a most complimentary letter upon a work of his which went home – indeed, a sort of rhapsody. I have no great opinion of Kendall’s judgment myself, but he certainly writes well.’

The implication seems to be that Kendall's letters are complimentary about some of Gordon's poems. Gordon's dismissal of Kendall's judgment is a gesture of modesty and diffidence – sitting strangely with the earlier assessment of Kendall as 'the best critic on poetry here'. The mention of Swinburne's praise for Kendall is confirmed by an item in the *Advocate: A Weekly Catholic Journal*. 16 April it noted that Kendall's *Leaves from Australian Forests* was highly commended by Algernon Swinburne in England.

28 April Gordon wrote to Riddoch about his immediate intentions: 'I have had some talk with Elliott, I think his name is, a surveyor who has been in the west. He tells me that property thereabouts has gone down in value, still I think my land ought to clear itself. I have a great wish to publish a small volume of verses which is now ready – I really think they will succeed now and I can get them published for about fifteen or twenty pounds. I have been awfully pushed lately and I walk in and out from Brighton every day. If you could help me ever so little now I think I could pull through. I am quite sure about Esslemont now, if I can last out two or three months.'

At some time in May Gordon received the review of his *Sea Spray and Smoke Drift* in the March 1870 number of the English journal *Baily's Magazine*, by H.A.L., The Old Shikarri, the pen-name of Major H. A. Leveson: 'Some very charming and spirited poems, written by one of the best and boldest riders that this country ever produced and Australia matured.

'Twenty years ago the name of Lindsay Gordon was well known in the Cotswold district as one who rode straight and craned not; but, as the old country is not big enough to hold us all, he and many more of her stalwart sons – good men and true – prompted by love of adventure, made their way to the Antipodes (in the piping days of the great gold rush), and there helped to found Britain's second empire, that sturdy off-shoot which, pray God, no demented statesman may ever sever from the parent stock.

'The innate pluck and manly bearing which carried him along in the van across country served him well during an uphill career, in a new land as he forged ahead in the hunt, so he took the lead and kept it amongst men of no common order. His sterling qualities gained him the good-will of all classes.' *Baily's* quoted Gordon's 'Gone', about Burke and Wills, and his poem about the Melbourne Cup, which 'stands perfectly unique as a specimen of what racing poetry should be. No poet has drawn a poem more true to nature.'

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29 April Kendall wrote to James Smith from Fitzroy, where he was renting a house at 28 Atherton Street, explaining yet further financial complications and irregularities: 'I presume Mr Stiffe informed you yesterday evening that I waited for you till about 4 p.m. and then was advised by Mr Chapman and himself to go home on account of my evident illness. The latter promised to apologize to you on my account.

'Last Saturday I drew the money and asked for you; but you were not in your office. In the afternoon I called again but the same answer was given to my inquiry for you. Presuming then that you would not be in town before Monday I left the office.

‘You will remember that I expressed a wish that *you* should draw the sum; and that you objected to do so. My wish proceeded from a knowledge of my weakness in resisting, while in the possession of money, the demands of pressing creditors of an ordinary character. Certainly the only creditor of this class that I had at the time was my landlord who, however, is a man that will not wait three days for his rent. On the evening of the Saturday referred to, I wrote to him, and asked him to let the rent stand over a week. The answer was “no”; and, immediately afterwards, he knocked at our door, and commenced to abuse myself and Mrs Kendall so loudly that passers-by were attracted. Then, to tell the truth, I felt so annoyed and ashamed that, in the heat of the moment, I handed him his money from the sum due to you. I intended to come in and explain at the earliest possible date, but, as I have already told you, I have been too unwell to stay for any length of time in town. Today, for example, I have been from six a.m. till four p.m. writing a sketch which is not finished yet; but which, were I well, would not occupy me longer than four hours. However I will complete it by tomorrow; and, as it is the best thing I have written for some time, perhaps you will accept it. If you do, draw the money yourself and don’t trust me. I have no desire to be dishonest, but when placed in the position I have described I have no control over my impulses.’

A decade later Kendall wrote about ‘the bitter old Bohemian days’ at Atherton Street in ‘On a Street’:

I dread that street – its haggard face
 I have not seen for eight long years;
 A mother’s curse is on the place,
 (There’s blood, my reader, in her tears).

The poem concludes:

But still I hate that haggard street,
 Its filthy courts, its alleys wild;
 In dreams of it I always meet
 The phantom of a wailing child.
 The name of it begets distress –
 Ah, song, be silent! show no more
 The lady in the perished dress,
 The scholar on the tap-room floor.

In ‘Henry Kendall’s Haggard Street’, *Adam and Eve* 3 May 1927, M. P. Sweeney described Atherton Street: ‘A cul-de-sac running parallel with Brunswick Street into the back yards of Gertrude Street, Fitzroy. There were no slums in Fitzroy at the time that Kendall came to live in a little stone house that still stands in the street, about which he wrote so beautifully and so bitterly ... One of Kendall’s truest friends was the late Mr Hartkopf, father of the present-day cricketer. He was a fine German literary scholar, and gave Kendall the first English translation of Goethe’s “Watermill” – a poem afterwards made famous by the late Mel B. Spurr in all parts of the Empire. Kendall never went home from Hartkopf’s old-fashioned wine tavern, with its barrels and rude forms, without a bottle of stern port to warm a chilly, cheerless night. Standing in those

days in Brunswick Street, opposite each other, and a few hundred yards from Kendall's home, were two hotels. They were the Labour in Vain and The Perseverance. The Labour in Vain was kept by a big Irishman, who used to quote Tom Moore to Kendall on both ordinary and extraordinary occasions. His kindly wife was at all times a benefactress to Mrs Kendall.

'Another great friend of Kendall's in Brunswick Street was Mr Allan, an ironmonger, who was a fluent student of Scottish poetry. His son is J. Alex Allan, who wrote brilliant verse in *The Bulletin* from 1904 till 1920, when he abandoned the muse for a commercial career ...

'Mr Mullany, still active and in business as a pawnbroker in Smith Street, Fitzroy, knew the Kendalls well. He had literary leanings, and was learning the pawn-broking business with a firm not far from Kendall's unhappy home. Many a time Mrs Kendall, under the name of Mrs Clarence (Kendall's second Christian name) went to young Mullany with worn-out articles and got five shillings. The parcel was put away, and the young man well knew that later it would go to the scrap heap and the rag mill. Young Mullany aspired to poetry himself, and realized that a brother bard in difficulties had to be helped.'



7 May 1870 Clarke, Gordon and Kendall all appeared together in *The Australasian*, Gordon with his poem 'Wolf and Hound', Kendall with 'A Cruise Among the South Sea Islands', and Clarke with the second part of 'The Last of Macquarie Harbour' in his 'Old Stories Retold' series.

In *A McCrae Miscellany*, Harry Chaplin prints a recollection of Gordon from George Gordon McCrae: 'In "Wolf and Hound" I have no *positive* certainty about it, though I have often thought he meant it for myself ... He penned my name towards the end of the second verse because a good deal with him while the *Bush Ballads and Galloping Rhymes* were in progress – that he put it in either inadvertently or designedly when in search of a rhyme – I wish I could be sure of the latter ... well! I am almost sure, but not quite.'

9 May Gordon wrote to Riddoch: 'Thanks to you I am able to keep my head above water for a time. The English mail will be in tomorrow perhaps but I don't think it possible that an answer to Stewart's notification could have come by this time. I have been writing again a little lately and my book is almost ready but I write with great effort now and don't feel much interest in it. I am getting a little stronger. In fact I walk in and out of Brighton nearly every week day. Walked in and out yesterday and in this morning. Mrs Gordon is also well and cheerful as usual. She had a bad attack of chest complaint last week but got over it well and quickly ...

'You asked me what it would take to clear me off, as I told you before I cannot say the exact amount yet I know the sum is a very small one. No one is pressing me just now, the only man that threatened to do so was a hay and corn dealer who is rather sharp and whom I treated rather roughly for being too familiar when the worse for liquor. I will give you more particulars when next I write, but if I can keep afloat (I think I can) till word comes from home I shall be all right because though the thing will not be settled then still it will be as beyond doubt that no one will mind trusting me. Hoping Mrs Riddoch and the young ones are well.'



17 May 1870 John Buckley Castieau, the governor of Melbourne gaol, recorded in his diary, now in the National Library of Australia: 'Weather fine. In attendance at the Supreme Court. Gave evidence in the afternoon in the case of Maria Cox charged with letting her child fall into the fire. The woman was found guilty of manslaughter ... Harry [Castieau's son] came home this afternoon in a state of great excitement; he had heard three shots fired, and was asked by a constable where the shooting was, then he saw a man very excited being taken off in custody. I thought nothing of it but afterwards learned that Mr G. P. Smith after defending Maria Cox was shot at by a barrister named Supple, a writer for the press. Supple is very near sighted and missed, he however used a revolver and fired again, running after Smith he again missed, but fired once more and shot Smith in the elbow. He was about again to fire when he was rushed by a publican named Walshe who however fell a victim for Supple fired and shot him in the belly. The case created a great sensation ...

'Met Neild and Haddon this afternoon. Neild wished me to send some papers I had written to show as my qualification for my being elected a member of the Yorick Club as he intended to propose me.'

The shooting took place in central Melbourne – in Spring Street, near Parliament House. Walshe died but Smith survived. George Paton Smith was a journalist, a barrister and a politician, one of the targets of *Humbug*. A former chief sub-editor of *The Age*, he had entered parliament in 1866 and turned against his earlier liberal backers.

Supple was a foundation member of the Yorick Club. Kendall seems to have known him quite well, and wrote about him sympathetically a couple of years later in 'Gerald Henry Supple', *The Freeman's Journal*, 2 December 1871: 'In the days where we were associated with him, we found Supple as good a fellow as ever breathed. He was understood by none, but liked by all who knew him – or, to speak more precisely, by all who were not influenced by party considerations.'

Kendall was less enthusiastic about Smith: 'Like certain others we could name, he sometimes took advantage of his adventitious position, to speak and act against people with whom he happened to have personal differences at the time ... When we say that this gentleman's bombast, moroseness, and utter want of courtesy were carried to his editorial chair, our readers may arrive at a pretty fair estimate of him as a whole. We do not know him personally, we have never held any communication with him, there is not the slightest grudge on our part against him; and, being therefore in a position to speak dispassionately, we have no hesitation in setting down our appraisal. Mr G. P. Smith (and here we merely echo a general opinion) is one of the most repulsive-mannered, ill-natured, unpopular men that ever stood on the floor of a Colonial Assembly.'

Gerald Henry Supple, born in Cork in 1823, was a staunchly nationalist Irish journalist and barrister, who, before emigrating in 1857, had contributed to Gavan Duffy's *The Nation* in Dublin and had written *A History of the Invasion of Ireland by the Anglo-Normans* (1856). Supple had

resigned as a journalist on *The Age*, incensed by Smith's anti-Irish articles. Kendall wrote: 'Those who know him best say that his love, in the old days, for Ireland and her grand but maligned forms of faith amounted almost to insanity; and it was the *quick* so to speak, of this passion that was wounded by Mr Smith. The offending articles from the pen of that gentleman, though they may not have sown the first seeds of the terrible monomania which afterwards led to such fatal consequences were unquestionably means that materially assisted its growth.'

Kendall continued: 'We were frequently brought by circumstances into contact with the subject of this paper. We found him a quiet, lonely man – one damned with a sensitiveness that almost amounted to disease, and suffering from perhaps the most trying of physical ailments. He went about, too, under the ban of that extremely morbid temperament which alienates its victims, so to speak, from the hearths of humanity, and makes them strangers in the great, glad, beautiful world around them. Every little accidental slight he received at the hands of his acquaintances was exaggerated by him – or rather by his painfully sensitive nature – into a glaring injury; and so he went on from day to day, brooding, and fancying, and fretting, till the demon of insanity had him fairly in its grip, and then came the terrible end.'

Kendall's description of Supple's sensitivity to perceived slights foreshadows McCrae's description of Kendall, quoted in Reed's dissertation: 'Though good natured and amiable to a fault, he was nevertheless ready and quick to take offence. In fact, being a Poet, he was over-sensitive and too often was apt to fancy malice where nothing but fun was intended.'



26 May Gordon brought Riddoch up to date with his publication plans: 'I got Kendall's letters back. The English magazine *Baily* of last arrival had a very favourable review of one of my old works, *Sea Spray*, but I have made a mess of this present publication which is now in type. I expected to get it done cheaper, and did not try to dispose of it in time.

'Now Robertson the bookseller has offered to take it. So that I shall not lose by it but I shan't make anything for my time and trouble except for a little praise more or less, for the work is sure to be reviewed well here and I think will be liked at home. The publishers here will most likely publish a book on their own responsibility but never as a rule buy it. Robertson says he lost by Kendall's poems and of course Kendall got nothing. Anyway I will send you a copy when it comes out.

'Writing verse spoils one for writing prose. You can't do the two things together, so I have not been able to write for *The Australasian*. Indeed I have had no humour and I can't write when I don't feel inclined.

'I was out at the review on the Queen's birthday with the Brighton Corps. The volunteers of course made an awful mess of the evolutions but this I believe they always do.

'If Doughty has sent you the rent, will you kindly forward me the balance – and I will try and square up all I can here. I wish the property was sold but I fear it will sell badly – However it

must go at once – Keep the £25 you sent me and send me the rest please. I hope I shall get good news by an early mail now.’

W. Park Low’s papers preserve some of Gordon’s correspondence with publishers about the proposed book. 26 May 1870, Clarson, Massina & Co. gave him an estimate for printing the collection: ‘Supposing your work to make 96 pages the cost will be as below for printing same

‘250 copies 31. 10. 0.

‘500 38. 18. 0.

‘1000 49. 10. 0.’

He sent the estimate to George Robertson who, however, decided not to take the book, replying, 27 May: ‘Taking into account the extreme dullness of trade and the multiplicity of my other engagements I feel constrained to decline the purchase of your new volume which I do with many thanks for the offer.’

It is from this period of Gordon’s involvement in the production of *Bush Ballads and Galloping Rhymes*, and his anxiety about the proofs of the ‘The Romance of Britomarte’ which appeared in it, that we can probably date George Gordon McCrae’s story in Humphris and Sladen: ‘His rote memory was wonderful. Gordon was no fool, but he could “rote” volumes (the exception to prove the Shakespearian rule).

‘I remember one day at the old Yorick he asked me to accompany him to Massina’s (the printer’s), to get the proofs of “Britomarte,” about which he was very anxious.

‘We got them and returned and in the club there, it was early in the day, and scarcely any one about, he recited “Britomarte” to me from beginning to end fluently and without a trip as he walked up and down the room.

‘His recitation was a sort of chant or croon, and I think it must have been peculiar to himself. The time in it very well marked. Once one got used to it, one liked it.’

In ‘Two Australian Writers’, in the *Fortnightly Review*, 1 September 1892, Francis Adams recorded a number of observations on Gordon’s style of recitation and quoted from ‘Hippodramia’: “I was often amused,” writes one who knew him well, “to hear him quote from the poets, and his recitations from the poets used to make me laugh outright. One day I said, ‘Hang it, Gordon, you can write good poetry, but you can’t read.’ His only way of quoting or reciting was in ‘a sing-song.’” Another friend escapes the difficulties of definition by merely calling it “odd,” saying that “his delivery was monotonous,” adding, however, that “his way of emphasizing the beautiful portions of what he recited was charming from its earnestness.” His own criticism on his verses was, “They don’t *ring* so badly, after all, old fellow, do they?” Once he says himself: -

‘My rhymes, are they stale? If my metre

‘Is varied, one chime rings through all;

‘One chime – though I sing more or sing less,

‘I have but one string to my lute.’

George Gordon McCrae gave Humphris and Sladen another recollection from this time. It involves one of the few mentions of a cricket match: ‘We were going together and not so very

long before his death to a cricket match on the East Melbourne ground, near Jolimont and, talking as we went along, he told me of a project he had for a new poem, and from the enthusiastic way he spoke of it I thought he meant it for his *magnum opus*. It was to be named after the heroine he had chosen, “Penthesilea” – Penthesilea, Queen of the Amazons; a stirring “horsey” poem full of the thunder of hoofs and dust-clouds and the twanging of the bow-strings, and, no doubt, he was the very man “to the manner born” for such a work.

‘Something occurred to interrupt our conversation which was not destined to be renewed, but I have often wondered whether A.L.G. left a draft or even a skeleton sketch of the Penthesilea behind him.’



A memoir by a ‘travelling correspondent of the Melbourne *Leader*’ in *The Press*, Christchurch, 23 September 1891 recalled: ‘In those days I was frequently with Gordon, and saw a great deal of him at the Yorick Club. That he was in embarrassed circumstances is, I think, very likely. He could not drive his Pegasus in harness, nor settle down to work with the regularity which a publisher of a newspaper proprietor must necessarily require from his authors or contributors. But he made a fair income, and was on intimate terms with many of the best men and most companionable in Melbourne – with the upper Bohemia, in short. Every one whom he met entertained for him feelings of warm affection. I am quite sure that if he had hinted at any pecuniary difficulties to half a dozen men who have now joined the majority they would have been relieved; but Gordon was as proud as he was reckless, as un-businesslike as he was shy. On two or three occasion I certainly thought that he seemed more reckless than usual. I saw him force an inexperienced horse over all the most difficult jumps on the Ballarat racecourse, long after perseverance had become useless and the race had been won by another steeplechase. A general officer, who was standing by me, remarked that he was riding for falls, but that if his judgment were as good as his courage he would be the best cross-country rider of the day. On another occasion Gordon and I were the sole occupants of a small sailing boat in Hobson’s Bay. It was blowing hard at the time and I suggested taking in sail. He refused for a long time, until I told him that if he wished to drown himself I had a strong objection to his including me in the catastrophe, after which he gave a reluctant assistance to me in hauling down the mainsail of our tiny craft.’



2 June 1870 the Melbourne *Punch* published ‘An Australian Poem (Written in the approved style by Our Special Poet)’. The authorship is uncertain, but the target was Kendall. Once again, alcohol is a theme. It is just possible that the author was Kendall himself, indulging in some self-lacerating self-parody. Possible; though Clarke is a more likely candidate.

What matter, ye woodlands, what matter,
At the fall of the nebulous night,
If a poet can’t say who’s his hatter

As he topples home turbulent, tight?
 It captures all too accurately Kendall's themes and rhythms and preoccupations.
 Are we to sit down in the ashes,
 With faces of sorrow and scorn,
 Because of the sodas and dashes
 We've mournfully taken at morn?

Is it well to be comic and cunning
 In the heart of this hyaline land,
 Where peddling pays better than punning,
 And grocers are glaucous and grand?

Far better, O darling, to 'slither'
 Down the depths of a bandicoot hole,
 Where the ghosts of solicitors shiver
 In realms of the boreal pole.



4 June *The Australasian* published Gordon's poem 'A Song of Autumn. By the author of *Ashtaroth*', written when he was staying in Toorak with Robert Power. That same day, Moir notes in his 'Chronology', Gordon heard that his claim on the Esslemont inheritance had failed.

'I am of the opinion that the Resolutive Clause in the Entail is defective,' wrote learned counsel Patrick Frazer, Edinburgh, 8 April, in a fifteen-page document. William Gordon, advocate of Aberdeen, sent an account of fees for Esslemont searches etc., 19 June 1869 – 12 February 1870 for £48 10s. 4d., preserved in the W. Park Low papers. Robb explains: 'It had all along been known that the Act of 1848 had abolished certain classes of entail, but the lawyers he consulted seemed to have taken it for granted that it did not affect the particular estate in which Gordon was interested. Now came the news that by a recent decision of the Scotch law-courts, sustained on appeal to the Privy Council, the class of entail to which Esslemont belonged was included in the category, and that it was effectually barred. He was now no nearer the acquisition of any permanent employment. He had no means of paying his debts ...'

McCrae recalled to W. Farmer Whyte in *The Sydney Mail*, 20 June 1912: 'Gordon brought me the Scots law opinions in the case to read over carefully and just to take the commonsense view, the only thing I could do, being no lawyer. It seemed all right. He was very much elated. Then came afterwards other papers, which, however, I did not see from which it appeared that an insuperable difficulty had arisen, owing to the discovery either of an entail or the breaking of an entail, I forget which. I have often thought that this Esslemont affair upset him more than any of his other troubles. He had almost decided on taking his passage home for himself and his wife and getting away as soon as possible – and then came the disappointment.' McCrae himself had

experienced a similar disappointment. 'He had been encouraged to hope for a legacy that would free him to become a full-time writer,' Brenda Niall records, but Georgiana and her family inherited nothing when the Duchess of Gordon died in 1864.

In *The Real Adam Lindsay Gordon* Maggie told her son, W. Park Low: 'I remember quite well the day he got the news from home about the Esslemont estate being disentailed. He was very much depressed and told me how he had hoped to be able to take me to England to this beautiful home. It must have been a great disappointment to him for he had been assured by the lawyers that the entail held good. He had travelling trunks made to order in anticipation of this trip home.'

Gordon's hopes of the £2500 annual income from the estate were gone. He had no wish to continue riding, and falling, in steeplechases. He resorted like Clarke and Kendall to money-lenders. Sutherland remarks in *Turner and Sutherland*: 'He obtained a small sum at the comparatively harmless rate of about 90 per cent per annum. So he was able to keep afloat a little longer ... In Brighton he owed about £100; he owed the money-lender £50; he would shortly have to pay £30 for his new book, then nearly printed, and he owed Mr Riddoch £200.' Massina said he was owed £75. According to Hutton the interest due to Lawson for his mortgaged property was £75 every six months.



Around this time Gordon and Kendall had a disagreement over the unacknowledged appropriation of three lines from Gordon's 'The Road to Avernus' in Kendall's poem 'Elijah' published in the *Australian Journal* for June 1870:

... and she who missed
A little mouth that used to catch, and cling –
A small sweet trouble – at her yearning breast.

Gordon had written, in the concluding lines spoken by Helen Raby:

And they bid me be glad for my baby's sake,
That she suffered sinless and young –
Would they have me be glad when my breasts still ache
Where that small, soft, sweet mouth clung?
I am glad that the heart will so surely break
That has been so bitterly wrung.

The lines undoubtedly drew on Gordon's grief at the death of his daughter Annie Lindsay; equally, Kendall responded to them from his own grief at the death of his daughter Araluen. Kendall had been charged with plagiarism before. As early as 1862 Morgan Evans accused him in the *Athenæum*, 19 July 1862, of taking one of his lines for inclusion in 'Kiama'; another accusation appeared in *Bell's Life in Sydney*, 28 July 1866. Horne had raised no objection to the incorporation of his lines in Kendall's 'Orara'. But Gordon's poem had not yet been published and he was not amused. 'Fragmentary Scenes from The Road to Avernus, an unpublished dramatic lyric' later appeared in *Bush Ballads and Galloping Rhymes*.

McLaren quotes Kendall's apology written from the Yorick Club: 'The more I brood over what vexed you the other day the more I feel hurt in spirit. I consider that the gentleman, whose remarks made you feel annoyed with me, acted with sinister motives; and it grieves me greatly to think that in my present state of physical, mental and pecuniary depression, I should have so many enemies in men to whom I know I have always been inoffensive.'

'As to yourself, I know you will believe me when I say that the lines in "Elijah" were copied from you in a moment when my memory was in a maze; and that I have never wished to pilfer from anybody. The truth is, the beauty of your verse, and its relation to my late loss, caused me to carry it away in my head where it became fused with the ideas that led to "Elijah."

'Touching "damn" and "Britomarte" the words were used in a parody – a parody written in the best spirit of good feeling, I had forgotten your having used the epithet.

'It must be plain to you that envy at least is not one of my vices. Wherever I have discovered excellence in my own line, I have hastened to acknowledge it. Only the other day I told Carrington and two or three others that I considered your forthcoming work would be universally deemed the highest result of the poetic faculty yet attained in Australia.

'Don't grumble at me for "boring" you with this long letter.'

He added a postscript: 'I have erased the plagiarism in Elijah, and intend to make due reparation in the next *Journal*.'

Kendall's reparation duly appeared: 'The following lines in my poem "Elijah" published in your last issue, were suggested by a passage in an unpublished drama by my friend the author of *Ashtaroth*.' After quoting the three lines, Kendall added: 'The author of *Ashtaroth*'s poem to which I am indebted is entitled "The Road to Avernus." It is only fair that I should make this acknowledgment. – H.K.'



14 June 1870 Kendall was involved in another literary dispute. He wrote to *The Argus*:

'Sir, – May I ask you, in the interests of fair play, to allow me space in your columns to deny a statement which appears in the *Westminster Review* for April last? In noticing my recent volume of verse the reviewer says that he is indebted to me for a copy of the work, together with a local criticism pasted in it. He remarks of the latter that it does away with the necessity for a review on his part, an assumption which he abides by.

'I have no doubt as to the cause of the *Westminster* reviewer's tone in the above matter, but I am not responsible for it. I did not send the book to him; but Mr George Robertson, the publisher, has given me leave to say who did. The gentleman, then, who has offended the *Westminster* reviewer is Mr Robertson's London agent. Apologizing for troubling you, I am faithfully yours, Henry Kendall.'

McLaren cites a letter he wrote to Patrick Moloney from the Yorick Club, 15 June: 'You will perceive by *The Argus* today that I have replied to the *Westminster Review*. I think it was

imprudent in taking notice of the affair, but you did not appear to believe my verbal denial. My fingers are so cold that I can hardly move the pen.'



Far more so than Clarke ever revealed in his letters to Cyril Hopkins, the freelance literary world was precarious. 'Austere' was Kendall's recurrent word to describe it, his experiences showing its nature all too clearly. Having been married for six months, Clarke now sought out financial security. He applied unsuccessfully for the position of curator of the picture collection in the National Gallery of Victoria in February 1870. Then 27 May, he applied for the position of clerk to the trustees of the Melbourne Public Library.

Thomas Alexander Browne, better known by his pseudonym Rolf Boldrewood, also applied for the position. In his biography of Boldrewood, Paul de Serville quotes a letter Browne wrote to Sir Redmond Barry, 11 April:

'Will you kindly support my application for that office. I have just lost everything by the forced sale of a sheepstation in Riverina after struggling for the last few year against drought losses and diminished values.

'In the interval of a life principally devoted to rude toil I have not wholly neglected literature and Art – and I think I could perform respectably the duties of the appointment.'

Barry backed Clarke. 10 June *The Argus* reported: 'Mr Marcus Clarke, the writer of the series of articles in *The Australasian* under the heading, "The Peripatetic Philosopher," has been appointed Secretary to the Trustees of the Public Library.'

His initial salary is variously given as £175 and £200 per annum. By September he was asking for a salary increase. He was employed there for the rest of his working life.

Clarke announced the end of the 'Peripatetic Philosopher' column in *The Australasian*, 11 June 1870: 'I have sold my birthright of free speech for a mess of official pottage, and so to all intents and purposes my "Peripatetic" is dead ...

'I have successfully humbugged you with my "philosophy" for three whole years,' he added. To be accurate it had been six months short of that.

A public service position was deemed to preclude him from journalism that involved anything that might seem like political comment.

"Faix, he jist sold himself for a Government billet, like many an honest man before and since," laughed jolly O'Donoghue,' Clarke wrote a year later in his story 'A Night with Horace', *Australasian*, 21 July 1871, referring to the Roman poet. O'Donoghue was the original surname of his father-in-law, the comedian John Dunn. It sounds like a comment Dunn might well have made about his son-in-law.

John Buckley Castieau, the governor of Melbourne gaol, noted regretfully in his diary, 12 June: '*The Australasian* will miss the P. P.'s column.'

Nonetheless, Clarke continued no less prolifically to write and publish, not only the serial of *His Natural Life*, but also stories, poems and articles for the press, as well as the occasional

theatrical venture. For the next twelve months he averaged a contribution a fortnight to *The Australasian* with his 'Old Stories Retold' and, beginning two months later, his series of Bullocktown stories.

The Argus reported, 27 September 1870: 'The *Athenæum* says, "Taking it altogether, there are very few novels published this season which deserve as much praise as *Long Odds*, and we think our fellow countrymen in Australia ought to be thankful at having such an author as Mr Marcus Clarke amongst them." If we were inclined to be facetious we might say that the *Athenæum* calls upon us to be thankful for small mercies.'

After eighteen months, in December 1871, Clarke resumed his role as a columnist with 'The Buncle Correspondence' in *The Argus*, and in May 1872 with the 'Noah's Ark' columns in *The Australasian*. Both continued until his break with the *Argus* group in November 1873.

In the *Melbourne Review* Turner describes Clarke's library appointment as 'a position which left him ample leisure to pursue his literary labours', adding, in Turner and Sutherland: 'It would be difficult to imagine any position in the Civil Service of Victoria which could present more congenial surroundings to a young literary aspirant than that which Clarke held for some ten years. His actual hours of duty were light, the work involved no great mental strain, and was free from anxiety. He had at command an unlimited supply of raw material from whence to draw inspiration, while scattering his press contributions throughout the Colonies; and he had the advantage of being associated with gentlemen who, in their appreciation of his literary ability, were willing to make allowances for his official shortcomings.'

Turner himself was at the same time, June 1870, appointed general manager of the Commercial Bank of Australia, and became a Unitarian lay preacher.

Browne began contributing to the *Town and Country Journal* to make some income. He was appointed Goldfields Commissioner at Gulgong the following year and he remained in the Civil Service until 1895. In 1873 as Rolf Boldrewood he began serializing the first of a series of novels, of which *Robbery Under Arms* ultimately made him an international reputation that rivalled Clarke's.



Clarke had described 'the full glory of the Public Library' in 'A Day in Melbourne', his account of a New Chum's first impressions that he sent to Cyril Hopkins in January 1865: 'The approach to the building is good. After passing up the flight of steps aforesaid and traversing some twenty yards of pavement, more steps are ascended and we stand in the porch of the building. It has evidently been built after the fashion and in imitation of the British Museum with a façade and heavy pillars running its whole length. Like most Melbourne public buildings, however, including the Parliament and Custom-houses, the original design has not been carried out in its entirety through lack of funds, and the present aspect of the library is but a poor one, the pillars only running halfway along its front and the bare bricks of the wings not yet covered with plaster.'

‘On entering, however, New Chum is struck by the resemblance to the British abortion. In the entrance-hall casts of the usual groups abound, while in the now nearly completed right wing objects of art, pictures, statuary, models, bas-reliefs and bronzes surround him on all sides. We pass up the stairs to the library. A fine collection of books it is too. New Chum is astonished for classics, history, travels, scientific works and works of fiction gleam from the walls in all the glories of morocco and gilding. New Chum attempts to take down a volume but in doing so, stumbles over a drunken mechanic who is snoring with his head pillowed on a copy of *Eothen* at one of the tables. As the admission is free, the library has become a fashionable lounge for the idle, drunken and dirty loafers who infest the town.

‘Here is one gentleman in a ragged, red jumper leaning drowsily over the *Saturday Review*; here another blackening with his filthy and beer-stained fingers a volume of Burnett for whom he cares as much as ordinary readers for the *Grand Cyrus*. A third, comfortably sunk in slumber, snores away an hour or two until the sun shall have set and he can resume with ease his avocations of loafing, drinking, sponging and perhaps thieving. In the midst of the general silence the sound of a quick footstep is heard and a portly, rubicund old gentleman walks sharply down the hall. This is Sir Harry Bedmont, judge of Supreme Court, the patron of the library and its most liberal donor. He is a thorough gentleman of the old school and though somewhat pompous, a benevolent, hospitable man and excellent judge. Let us leave him to chat with Buffins the Librarian. See how he bows to him! Buffins is a little man who dabbles in literature, has written a burlesque for the *Royal* and pens weekly criticisms for *Bell’s Life in Melbourne* under the *nom de plume* of Oliver Oldworthy.’



Clara Aspinall observed: ‘The Public Library is another of the *lions* of Melbourne, for which the citizens are mainly indebted to the exertions of Sir Redmond Barry, one of the Judges of the Supreme Court, who, classically speaking, may be called the Maecenas of Victoria. He is the great patron of the arts, and of refinement, and elevation of taste, and is therefore regarded, by those who are capable of appreciating his exertions, as a public benefactor.’

Sir Redmond Barry (Sir Harry Bedmont in Clarke’s account to Hopkins) was the moving spirit behind the library’s establishment and president of the trustees. Turner paid tribute to him in his *History of Victoria*: ‘It has been well said of him that though he was not a man of deep learning himself, he had been, above all others, the means of bringing both learning and learned men to the colony. He had unquestionably been in the forefront of every movement for the intellectual development of the people amongst whom he spent his life. The University, the Public Library, and the National Gallery were his foster-children, and for their advancement he worked with unceasing activity.’

In 1869 it had become a copyright library and a copy of every book published in Victoria was required by law to be deposited in it. Galbally writes: ‘The Trustees’ Report for 1875 noted that Barry had himself donated to the Library upwards of 1000 books and pamphlets, many of the

latter being Australian publications long since out of print.’ Despite Barry’s wishes and campaigns by liberal reformers like Higinbotham, it was closed on Sundays. Asked were there many works of fiction in the collection, Barry is said to have replied, according to *The Argus*, 5 April 1947: ‘Very few indeed, sir, and I am thankful to say that those few are being rapidly appropriated by a few unscrupulous persons, and will not be replaced.’ In due course fiction was included, but in *The Argus*, 22 October 1904, Walter Murdoch complained, that it still did not hold a complete collection of Clarke’s works.

Clarke’s *History* recorded in 1877: ‘The building was opened in 1856 by Major-General Macarthur. It contained at that time only 3846 volumes. It now contains nearly 100,000. Admission to this institution is absolutely free, any person who is clean being suffered to enter and handle the books without restraint or interference. A librarian and staff of assistants are placed in charge of the books and instructed to assist visitors and students.’

Cyril Hopkins quotes Clarke as claiming that the holdings of the Melbourne Public Library numbered 200,000 volumes. Possibly Clarke was somewhat enthusiastically exaggerating, or perhaps Cyril misread his handwriting. In *Australia and New Zealand* Trollope gave a rather dismissive estimate of in ‘1870, no more than 60,000 volumes, which to those who are accustomed to wander among the shelves of the British Museum, or of the Oxford or Cambridge libraries, does not seem to be a large number.’

Whatever the correct figure, it was a substantial collection. With the resources of this major institution on hand, Clarke had ready access to a huge range of books freely available on the shelves. And there were other collections in Melbourne. According to the 1871 *Report of the Trustees of the Public Library, Museums and National Gallery of Victoria* the city’s four main libraries – public, parliamentary, supreme court, and university – held 111,921 volumes, with not more than 15,000 replicas.



‘Cheery, cultured, courteous, Redmond Barry, – did he not write a charade duly enacted by us youths and maidens, besides coaching us in “The Chough and Crow” and divers other glees and part-songs?’ Rolf Boldrewood wrote in *Old Melbourne Memories*. Ann Galbally’s biography *Redmond Barry: An Anglo-Irish Australian* narrates his career. Barry was born in Ireland in 1813, a younger son of a landed Anglican family, the Barrys of Ballyclough, who traced their ancestry to the time of William the Conqueror. Like Clarke and Gordon, his family had West Indian and military connections; five of his brothers served in the British Army. Educated at Trinity College Dublin, and admitted to the Irish bar in 1838, he arrived in Australia 1839 after a sea voyage in which he created a scandal by having an affair with the wife of one of the other passengers. He joined the Melbourne Club, becoming president and honorary secretary at various times. Garryowen records in *The Chronicles of Early Melbourne 1835–1852* that Barry fought a duel with one of its members, Peter Snodgrass: ‘Though the weather was the reverse of promising Barry made his appearance on the ground done up with as much precision as if attending a Vice-

Regal *levee*. Even then he wore the peculiarly fabricated bell-topper ... was strap trousered, swallow tail coated, white vested, gloved and cravated to a nicety ...'

Barry became the first solicitor-general of Victoria in 1851, was elevated to the bench of the Supreme Court in 1852, became the first chancellor of the University of Melbourne in 1853, and was knighted in 1860.

Annie Baxter Dawbin recorded an episode at the Mayor's Fancy Ball in her diary, 13 September 1863: 'Mr P. Mansergh's eldest son was in character of "Handy Andy" and he made some exquisite blunders: *par exemple* when Sir Redmond Barry asked him how he was, he answered "Quite well yer honour; and I hope yerself and the mistress and children are quite well too."! This caused amusement; because his "Honour" seduced another man's wife, and she has a large family by him.' Barry's mistress, Mrs Louisa Barrow, daughter of an Irish peasant farmer and wife of a stone-mason who died in 1859, lived in a separate establishment. They never married, though she bore Barry four children who were given his surname.

Marcus Clarke's cousin, Andrew Clarke, used to attend Barry's bachelor dinner parties, where Barry wore old-fashioned knee breeches, stockings and buckled shoes. Andrew was the first president and Barry the vice-president of the Philosophical Society in 1854. Marcus's uncle Judge James Langton Clarke was a legal colleague of Barry's. When in 1870 Judge Clarke retired from the bench and settled in Nice, Sir Redmond Barry was the nearest approximation to a family figure to keep an eye on Marcus.

Mackinnon remarks on 'the interest Sir Redmond Barry evinced in the rising *litterateur*, whom he took under his parental wing, when obtaining for him the secretaryship of the Public Library. And this interest and regard the respected judge retained for his *protégé*, despite his oft-repeated thoughtless acts ... But with all the warm regard there existed between the venerable judge and the youthful author, there was always a certain *hauteur* on the one hand, and a reverential humility on the other, in their official and social relationships.'

Mackinnon records one characteristic vignette: 'It was a hot summer's day, and, as was his style in such weather, the librarian was dressed dandily in unspotted white flannel, with a genuine cabbage-tree hat stuck defiantly on the back of his head; and so clothed he was leisurely wending his way up the steps of the library when he met the President, looking more starched, if possible, than ever, and wearing the well-known, flat-rimmed, tapering bell-topper, which shone in the glare of the noonday sun: and the following brief dialogue ensued.

'President: "Good morning, Mr Clarke."

'Librarian: "Good morning, sir."

'President: "I scarcely think your hat, however cool it may be, is exactly suited to the position you occupy in connection with this establishment, Mr Clarke – Good morning, Mr Clarke."

'And with a stiff bend of the erect body the President took his departure with just a glimmer of a smile playing round the firmly closed haughty lips.'

Clarke was fond of his cabbage-tree hat. It had been made for him at Pentridge and *The Bulletin* recorded, 1 March 1902, that his third son, Rowley, took it with him when he sailed to South Africa with the 2nd Commonwealth contingent. It is preserved in the picture collection of

the State Library of Victoria. A portrait by Frank Goldstraw from around 1880, 'In His Habit As He Lived', shows Barry in his bell-topper on horseback, the columns of the Public Library in the background.



Hugh McCrae recalling his father's friendship with Clarke in *My Father and My Father's Friends* writes that George McCrae 'often pointed out a green metal lion half-way up the steps leading to the Melbourne Public Library. It was into the mouth of this lion that Marcus used to commit his unfinished cigar, before being manacled to the desk at his office. The lion, smoking the cigar, became a signal to his friends that Marcus was within.'

In 'Marcus Clarke at the Public Library', Sandra Burt quotes an undated note to Shillinglaw, written at eleven a.m.: 'For God's sake come up to the Library and have a drink! If you don't come in ten minutes I shall calmly perjure myself. p.s. *HOT COPPERS*.' Hot coppers was slang for a parched throat after a drinking bout.

Nonetheless other evidence suggests that Clarke valued his position at the library and took his role seriously. His briefcase proclaimed in bold lettering MARCUS CLARKE PUBLIC LIBRARY MELBOURNE. It is preserved in the National Library. The title page of his third book, *Old Tales of a Young Country*, announced 'By Marcus Clarke, Secretary to the Trustees of the Public Library, Museums, &c., Melbourne', in the way academics used to, and sometimes still do, indicate their university affiliations in their publications. The following page offered a dedication: 'To the Trustees of the Public Library, Museums, & National Gallery of Victoria, this little work is inscribed, by their obedient servant, the author.' The preface is dated, 'The Public Library, Museums, &c., Melbourne, 30th November, 1871.' When *His Natural Life* appeared in book form in 1874, Clarke's dedication to Duffy was likewise given as from The Public Library, Melbourne.

In the Preface to *Old Tales*, Clarke writes: 'They were dug out by me at odd times during a period of three years, from the store of pamphlets, books, and records of old times, which is in the Public Library.' Three years would take the beginnings of Clarke's researches back to November 1868, eighteen months before he joined the library staff. Maybe he meant two years. He was never that precise about dates, and had a tendency to exaggerate numbers.

In announcing that his researches for the book came from the library's own holdings, Clarke was clearly defining his role as one of publicizing and promoting the library. He also contributed to a project of its affiliated institution, *Pictures in the National Gallery Melbourne*, photographed by Thomas F. Chuck, under the direction of Eugene von Guérard, the letterpress by Marcus Clarke, published by F. F. Baillière in twelve monthly parts from October 1873 to September 1874, and then issued as a book to mark the opening of the Gallery the following year, *Photographs of the Pictures in the National Gallery Melbourne* edited by Marcus Clarke. Clarke wrote commentaries on paintings by Edwin Long, Samuel Bough, Ernest Hillemacher, Frederick Lee, C. M. Webb, William Melby, Penry Williams, Louis Buvelot, R. Herdman, Otto Weber,

John Frederick Herring and Nicholas Chevalier. A second series, November 1874 to March 1875, featured another six paintings by Charles West Cope, Henry Gritten, Guillaume Köller, E. Opie, C. J. Lewis, and G. F. Folingsay.

Years later in his unsuccessful application for the position of librarian, 28 October 1880, Clarke stressed his bibliographic skills, suggesting again that he took his role seriously: 'For knowledge of bibliography I may claim special consideration. My personal tastes and public circumstances have alike led me to make that branch of information my peculiar study. Privately I have collected largely while it has been my good fortune to have been entrusted with the compilation of the *Bibliographical Catalogue of the Public Library* which – in my holograph – has been used in stocktaking since 1874, and I have also collated every book and pamphlet which has come into the library for the last seven years.'

His dozen identified contributions to the English antiquarian and scholarly journal, *Notes and Queries*, demonstrate these bibliographical interests, as well as some self-promotion. In a note on 'The Australian Drama', 20 February 1875, he drew attention to his own *Foul Play*, *Peacocks Feathers* and *Plot!* He also drew attention to Gordon's 'Sick Stockrider' in a note on 'Montaigne's Essays', 3 October 1874, quoting a stanza and remarking that Whyte-Melville quoted from Gordon in *Satanella*. 'A constant contributor,' *Notes and Queries* recorded in its notice of Clarke's death.



Through his position at the Library Clarke came to know Charles Gavan Duffy, the Irish nationalist, politician and writer. Duffy was appointed a Trustee in 1870. The Library, Museum and National Gallery were together under the same board of trustees, and Duffy was chairman of the Gallery committee.

Born in 1816 in County Monaghan, a Catholic, Duffy had been one of the founders of the Irish Confederation, which led to the failed rebellion of 1848. He was tried five times for treason, but never convicted. He then established the Tenant League to attempt Irish Land reform, but it failed to gain sufficient support. He came to Australia in 1855 at the age of 39 and was in and out of political office in Victoria for the next quarter of a century. Geoffrey Serle describes him: 'an unusual political figure in Victoria, a largely disinterested reformer, with little inclination for moneymaking. His liberalism was classic with a colonial dash of utopianism.' His attempt to break the stranglehold of the wealthy squatters and open up land-holdings for small settlers with the Land Act of 1862, drafted by Duffy, William Hearn and R. D. Ireland, failed to achieve its aim. Turner writes in his *History*: 'The conditions of selection were hedged round with numerous provisions for improvements and cultivation, and required statutory declarations of *bona-fide* intentions. But they proved delusive, in consequence of the omission to make these onerous conditions mandatory on the selector's "assigns." As soon as a man could raise the £1 per acre he acquired a freehold, which he could readily sell at £3 per acre to a buyer who was not bound by any conditions of residence, fencing or cultivation. Hence much of the land reverted, unimproved,

to those who could use it profitably for wool growing, even at the enhanced price.’ Stuart Macintyre writes in *A Colonial Liberalism*: ‘The legislation was riddled with loopholes that the squatters exploited to the full and it emerged that members of the ministry, including O’Shanassy and Ireland, had consulted with the squatters when the legislation was drafted.’ De Serville writes in *Pounds and Pedigrees*: ‘Squatters used dummying, inside knowledge and the co-operation of friends in the Lands and Survey Department to thwart the provisions. Some 600,000 acres found its way into the possession of about a hundred squatters.’ Some saw the Land Act as a sham, a conspiracy in which O’Shanassy and Duffy, as *The Age* put it, 24 December 1862, ‘served their employers, the squatters.’

Turner records in his *History*: ‘He was sufficiently early in Ministerial office to secure a life pension of £1000 per annum for two years’ service.’ Cyril Pearl writes that as a result in 1863 ‘Duffy was able to buy four hundred acres of land at Sorrento, at the entrance to Port Phillip Bay, and to build a sea-side cottage on it’. In *Australian Writers* Desmond Byrne quotes a recollection from Duffy: ‘As one of the trustees to the public library (Melbourne), I saw Clarke constantly and had always a friendly, and sometimes a confidential, conversation with him. He visited me now and then at Sorrento, and on one of these occasions he spoke of a story he had running through a Melbourne periodical about which he was perplexed. He asked me to read it, and tell him unreservedly what I thought of it. I read the story carefully, making notes on the margin, and wrote him frankly the impression it made on me.’

The story was *His Natural Life*, which Clarke had begun serializing in the *Australian Journal* in March 1870.

Clarke may already discussed other matters. In ‘John Mitchell’s Escape from Van Diemen’s Land’, *Australasian*, 15 and 22 October 1870, Clarke cites Mitchell’s own memoir as a source, but Joan Poole writes in her edition of *Old Tales of a Young Country*: ‘The story opens with a discussion of the Young Ireland party and the abortive rising of 1848 which owes little to Mitchell but may owe something to Clarke’s friendship with Sir Charles Gavan Duffy.’

Did Duffy see in Clarke something of his younger self? At the age of twenty-three Duffy had become editor of the *Vindicator* in Belfast; three years later in 1842 he established and edited *The Nation*. *The Nation* became the focus of Irish nationalism, the journal of the ‘Young Ireland’ movement. A significant part of Duffy’s agenda was to promote Irish writing. He wrote in his memoirs: ‘The experiment commenced of appealing to an old bardic people in passionate popular verse. The experiment was a success, and the anthology that collected a selection of the poetry published in *The Nation* went through fifty editions.’

‘Nothing tended to impede the career of Mr Duffy in Australia so much as his previous connection with *The Nation*,’ Richard Horne remarked in *Australian Facts and Prospects*: ‘It alarmed the prejudices of the majority of English and Scotch, not to speak of the native landowners, squatters and old settlers. They regarded him for a time as an Irish ogre, who had come for their gold, and whose sons would eat all their potatoes.’ Frank Fowler, however, claimed in *Southern Lights and Shadows* that Duffy’s editorial and literary activities were greater than his political achievements: ‘Duffy, had he never meddled with politics – in the realm of

which he is a very ordinary person – might have left a good reputation behind him. What a vital strength there is in some of his lyrics! While a preface from his pen I read the other day (it was to a noble book of Irish ballads) appeared to me, for a piece of brilliant critical writing without a taint of the meretricious, equal to anything in that same line by Professor Wilson.’

After he retired from politics and returned to Europe Duffy resumed his literary activities, publishing *Young Ireland, a Fragment of Irish History* in 1880, and following it with a second volume in 1883, a life of his friend the Irish poet Thomas Davis in 1890, a record of his friendship with Thomas Carlyle, *Conversations with Carlyle* in 1892, and his memoirs *My Life in Two Hemispheres* in 1898. In the 1890s he became involved in ‘The Library of Ireland’ publishing project, clashing with W. B. Yeats, who recalled in *The Trembling of the Veil*, ‘I constantly fought out quarrels and pressed upon the unwilling Gavan Duffy the books of our new movement’.

Duffy had entertained plans to start a journal in Australia. Frank Fowler quotes a letter received from him in 1858: ‘I had hoped that I might count upon your assistance in a Quarterly Federal Review, towards which I intended to invite the aid of the best intellects ... in Australia, without reference either to their politics or their *locale*. Something like the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, in which every knight would fight under his own banner, and with his own proper battle-cry.’ The letter was sent on the day Fowler departed back to England, escaping the debts he had incurred, partly through his own journal, *The Month*. A. W. Martin records that Duffy likewise approached Henry Parkes, whose daily newspaper, *The Empire*, which he had started in 1850, had folded in 1858 with massive debts. Parkes declined. In 1862 Duffy established a Catholic weekly, the *Victorian*, and invited Daniel Deniehy to edit it, but, Cyril Pearl records in his biography *Brilliant Dan Deniehy: A Forgotten Genius*, it lasted less than two years. Then in February 1868 Duffy helped found the *Advocate: A Weekly Catholic Journal*, which survived until 1990. The *Advocate* had literary interests, and to the end of the century, and beyond, regularly ran items reporting on or reviewing Clarke and Kendall’s books, cantatas, plays, overseas reputation and reviews, public appointments, commissions and bankruptcy.

Clarke’s editorial involvement with the *Colonial Monthly*, *Humbug* and the *Australian Journal* was less avowedly political, yet nonetheless had a nationalist agenda. Clarke like Duffy had taken on an editorial role in his early twenties, and like Duffy he had a strong, literary project in mind. As he wrote in 1876 in his preface to Gordon’s poems: ‘The student of these unpretending volumes will be repaid for his labour. He will find within them something very like the beginnings of a national school of Australian poetry.’

Duffy may have been an influence on Kendall in this context, too. In 1871, after he had returned to Sydney, Kendall contributed a series of ten essays entitled ‘The Harp of Erin’ to *The Freeman’s Journal*; the subjects included many of the poets Duffy had known and published in *The Nation*: Thomas Davis, Clarence Mangan, Thomas D’Arcy McGee, Samuel Ferguson, Speranza (the mother of Oscar Wilde) and Eva. Kendall followed this with a second series ‘Notes upon Men and Books’ which promoted Australian writers alongside British and American.



Like Kendall, Julian Tenison Woods and Gordon were both in debt and struggling with their demons. *The Southern Cross*, the monthly religious magazine Tenison Woods had started in 1867, ceased publication in 1870, leaving him responsible for its debts. Other debts had been incurred for the Sisters of St Joseph and for housing for the community of men he had founded, the Brothers of the Sacred Heart. His biographer Margaret Press writes: 'He had borrowed from the banks for these building projects at a high rate of interest; even when he paid in over £800 which he had received from his publishers, the amount owing on mortgage and interest had crept beyond £3500.'

Meanwhile two of the Sisters of St Joseph were having visions and claiming dramatic spiritual experiences. In Holy Week, April 1870, the tabernacle in the Sisters' oratory was rifled and scarlet stains appeared on the altar cloth. The two sisters later confessed to fraudulent behaviour. But at the time Tenison Woods believed miraculous, and malign, spiritual events were taking place. He had begun experiencing his own visions and delivering his own predictions, most of which were proved wrong. Suffering recurrent psychic attacks, amidst the stress of it all he became so ill that he was given the last sacraments.

Sister Mary MacKillop was now in Brisbane. George O'Neill quotes a letter Tenison Woods wrote to her, 20 June 1870: 'The other night, after lying down, I suddenly became chill and cold, and though the fire was burning brightly it went out, and so did the candle which was also lighted. Three beings entered my room in the dark, and without my being able to resist or cry out, carried and placed me in some conveyance there was outside – a very common and rough cart – and hurried me away at a great rate down past the gaol to the banks of the Torrens below North Adelaide. Here the ground seemed to open and I was taken to an awful place, the horror of which I cannot described ... I was paralysed with fear. I felt that I was in the hands of the devil and had done with this world. It was surely death in life. I was then taken to this awful place, and one of the beings seized me and said that I had died suddenly and that my body and soul were now to be cast into hell for all eternity for having worshipped a creature; and at this moment a fearful serpent twined itself round my waist and said that I was his for ever. I still feel the awful, stifling pressure of that serpent.'

The devils accused him of having been their servant for a long time, and showed him his sins so that he could not deny their accusations. They then told him to renounce Mary, who had led him into this place of punishment 'and they blasphemed her holy name in a way that made the place echo ...'

He continued: 'They dragged me towards the fire and tormented me in many ways for three hours; but the name of Mary, though it seemed to redouble their fury, weakened their efforts ... My guardian angel brought me back and healed my wounds and bruises.'

He awoke at five in the morning, remembering nothing until he began to say the office before the Blessed Sacrament. He conceded that he had 'ever since been troubled lest it might be an illusion' but nonetheless, he told Mary MacKillop, 'I say to you that I solemnly assert in the names of Jesus and Mary that all I tell you is literally true.'

He continued: 'The night following I was so severely beaten that I had not an inch of my body without a bruise. I don't really know how they did not kill me, because they struck me so fiercely about the head and body with clubs. My guardian angel took away all the marks and nearly all the pain, and next day (Sunday) I was able to preach six times without failing, though I was very much exhausted in the evening from my beating. Last night they tied a rope round my neck and dragged me about the church and threw me about like a sack ...'

21 June he wrote to Mary MacKillop again: 'My dear Sister Mary, if I have tried your credulity by what I wrote yesterday, I shall try it very much more by what I shall write today ...'

Having fallen asleep 'I was very rudely awoke by a devil – the one which usually assaults me and whom I believe to be a fallen spirit of a very high order. He was like a hideous dog but walking erect with like human limbs. He had a drawn sword of a very wide blade in his hand – a kind of sharp, heavy scimitar ... He gave me a blow on the left leg above the foot and nearly severed it. I began to bleed, as you may imagine, and soon I was in a pool of blood. The bed and everything was saturated and I felt myself dying. I called on Mary, but he only laughed at me ... I still faintly continued to call ... he stood mocking me and gibing for a quarter of an hour, and then suddenly seemed to get into a fury and struck me across the stomach, burying the sword in my body and laying open the intestines. I felt that my hour was come ...'

But then Mary herself intervened and healed him completely. She told him that after his death 'the scars of these wounds would be plainly visible upon my body. My guardian angel removed everything from the bed that was stained with blood, and placed other things perfectly similar there. Even the boards of the floor were removed and others like them placed there. I am sure these blood-stained things will be found again some day. Our gentle Mother then told me to be of good courage and said that in a few days a great sum or money would be placed in my hands to meet all my wants ...'



Gordon's new book of poems was about to be published. The reviewer for *The Argus*, 28 June 1870, referred to having received his copy on 21 June. In *The Bulletin*, 6 March 1929, Hugh McCrae published a letter written to his father from Kendall from the Yorick Club, 23 June 1870: 'Read my review of Gordon's new volume. Said review is in *The Australasian* for this week.

'I will return your handkerchief after it comes back from the wash.'

That same day, 23 June, Gordon called in at his publisher's. A. H. Massina recalled: 'He expected some money on the day his last book *Bush Ballads and Galloping Rhymes*, was published.

'He owed me about £75, and said to me, "I suppose you want some money."

'And I replied, "Printers generally do."

'Gordon said, "Well, I'll be up in the morning with a cheque."

According to Sutherland in the *Melbourne Review*, October 1883, 'Gordon dropped into Clarson and Massina's office in the morning, heard some friendly criticism from Marcus Clarke

and others, insisted on knowing how much was due for the book, then went out in search of means to pay the various debts he had imprudently incurred.’

At some point he is said to have been shown a proof of Kendall’s review forthcoming in that week’s *Australasian*. Whether he was shown it by Clarke, by Kendall or by someone else, is unclear.

Kendall’s review declared: ‘A volume of verse published in Australia places a local critic at all times in a position of difficulty; but when it happens to be of unusual excellence, there is a twofold trouble in the way of his criticism. In the first place, he has to deny the popular dogma that nothing good can come out of Nazareth; and secondly, he is called upon to furnish sufficient evidence to a sceptical public in support of his case. This is exactly the situation we find ourselves in after reading the poems which form the subject of this review; but we are bound to say the task imposed upon us is cheerfully and confidently accepted. To begin then, the author of *Ashtaroath* is, we state it emphatically, a poet, who by his present volume has made a rich addition to the permanent possessions of English literature. It is a book that will, as a matter of course, place him on a high footing with the *élite* of letters; whilst the healthy and straightforward character of its contents – or, at least, of most of them – will secure its popularity where verses are not usually popular.’

The review continued with some detailed analysis of the poems, and concluded: ‘after all has been said for and against him, the fact remains that he has laid Australia under a deep and lasting obligation. Amongst the few writers of imaginative literature that these colonies have produced, he certainly occupies no secondary position. He has contributed what we believe to be a durable addition to the treasures of the English language, and one that will be talked about, written of, read, and enjoyed long after this unquiet, unsettled generation has passed away. There are few things of the kind published nowadays, concerning which we could express such confident anticipations.’

Massina’s office was at 72 Little Collins Street East. The office of *The Argus* and *The Australasian* was at 76 Little Collins Street East, beside the Argus Hotel, and the old Yorick Club rooms were nearby. Gordon could readily have met both Clarke and Kendall in this vicinity. According to Sutherland in Turner and Sutherland, Gordon met Kendall ‘in Collins Street, and the two wandered into the Argus Hotel bar for a rest.’ It is not known how many drinks Gordon and Kendall had nor how long they were there. Sutherland says they sat for a couple of hours. M. P. Sweeney, writing some sixty years later in *Adam and Eve*, 3 May 1927, says they met not at the Argus Hotel but at the old Adam and Eve Hotel in Little Collins Street and that they had seven shillings between them, and spent it.

A memoir by a ‘travelling correspondent of the Melbourne *Leader*’ who claimed ‘I knew him more intimately, perhaps, than any person now living’ offered some further details in *The Press*, Christchurch, 23 September 1891: ‘The truth is that he spent the greater portion of the day of his death in the smoking-room of the old Yorick Club. We talked together about all sorts of topics, until at last we got on to the subject of marsupial animals, and he told me a number of facts about the habits of kangaroos which he had learned from personal observation. The Rev. Dr Bleasdale

came into the room, and we all three joined in the conversation. Gordon appeared to both of us unusually cheerful, companionable and sensible, and spoke very hopefully of his prospects. When we heard the next day about his melancholy death on the evening after he had left us, both Dr Bleasdale and myself came to the conclusion that he must have been attacked with sudden mania through the injury to his head from which he suffered. We both felt certain that when he parted from us three hours before the fatal deed he had no intention of shorting his life. And that was the general feeling of all who had seen him and conversed with him on that last day of his too short life.'

In Humphris and Sladen Frank Madden offers an account of meeting Gordon that afternoon: 'I think the story of his meeting Kendall on the evening before he shot himself is also doubtful as I met him a little after four o'clock on that winter's day and walked with him as far as St Kilda. In justice to him I should say that the most unlikely thing he would do was to spend his last few shillings in drink as he never cared for it, and so far as I knew seldom took it at all. He shows his contempt for it in his verses. Of one thing I am clear, that when I left him at St Kilda, he was absolutely sober, but very much depressed and melancholy. He told me that he had asked a friend to lend him £100 to enable him to get to England, but his friend had refused to make the advance and he was most down-hearted and despondent.

'He told me he had finished reading the proofs of his poems and that he would be glad if I would send to ... his publishers, and obtain the manuscript and keep it as a present. I did not think when he said present he meant a memento.'



Sutherland continues the narrative in the *Melbourne Review*, 1883: 'Next morning he rose early, without waking his wife, who, however, started to semi-consciousness at the touch of his long beard as he bent over to kiss her; but he whispered that he was going for a walk, and she fell asleep again.' W. Park Low draws on his mother's recollections in *The Real Adam Lindsay Gordon*. Gordon had risen early as usual, kissed his wife and gone out. He nearly always went for a swim before breakfast. But after he had been away rather a long time, Mrs Kelly came and told Maggie that he had not returned and that he had taken his rifle. 'Mrs Gordon says: Greatly agitated, I dressed quickly and rushed down to the butts and asked people there if they had heard any firing. But they had not. I hastened home again and told the groom to get the horses saddled and we would ride round the neighbourhood in search of Gordon. But just as they were ready Mrs Kelly told me that he was coming with another gentleman. I told the groom to unsaddle and put the horses right again, and then I hurried out to meet, as I thought, Gordon. It was not Gordon, but two gentlemen, the doctor and a friend, coming to break the news to me. As soon as I saw them I seemed to realize that something serious had happened and cried out, "Where is Gordon?" I hardly know what happened for a while after the terrible news had been told me.'

Saturday 25 June, *The Argus* ran a report: 'SUICIDE OF MR A. L. GORDON.

‘An exceedingly painful feeling was created yesterday morning in Melbourne, particularly among literary and sporting circles, by a report that Mr A. L. Gordon, the well-known poet and gentleman steeplechase rider, had committed suicide by shooting himself in the scrub near the Brighton beach. At first the rumour was very generally disbelieved, but on making inquiries it turned out to be too true. Mr Gordon was in Melbourne on Thursday afternoon, and was seen by a large number of his acquaintances. Nothing unusual was noticed in his manner, except that he seemed more cheerful than was usual with him. He went home about half-past 5 o’clock, and took tea with Mrs Gordon, having taken with him a package of cartridges for his rifle. He spoke to Mr Kelly, with whom he lodged, about going out to practise the next morning, as he had made a match to shoot with some person whom he did not name. They also conversed about the Brighton Artillery Corps, of which they both were members. During the evening, and in fact all through the night, Mr Gordon seemed extremely restless, and was in and out of the house several times, but there was nothing so peculiar in his manner as to excite apprehensions in the mind of his wife or the persons in the house. Early on Friday he was missed, but still nothing serious was apprehended until it was found that he had taken his rifle with him.

‘From the little that is known of him after he left the house, it appears that about half-past 7 o’clock in the morning he called at the Marine Hotel, and asked for Mr Prendergast, the landlord, and was informed by his son that he was not then up. On being asked if he should awake him, Mr Gordon said it was of no great consequence. He then had a glass of brandy, and left the house. Going down Park Street, a fisherman named Harrison met him about a quarter of a mile from the Marine Hotel, and bade him “Good morning,” to which he made no reply, and passed on. This was within 60 yards from where the body was found. After passing the fisherman, Mr Gordon must have turned off Park Street, into the thick scrub. He had then loaded the rifle with the only cartridge he had with him, as the empty cartridge-case was found a few yards from the body. From the position in which the body was found, Mr Gordon must have seated himself on the ground, and placing the butt of the rifle firmly in the sand, between his feet, put the muzzle to his mouth, and with a forked tea-tree twig pushed the trigger and thus exploded the rifle. The bullet passed through his brain and out of the back of the head, carrying away a piece of the skull about an inch in circumference. Death must have been instantaneous, as when the body was found the gun was still between the legs, one hand clasping the barrel to his breast, while the prong of the twig was still on the trigger. His hat was lying a few yards off, having evidently been placed there before the gun was fired, as it contained his knife, pipe, some tobacco, and one shilling. The suicide must have been committed between 8 and 9 o’clock, as the body was discovered at the latter hour by Mr A. P. Allen, a grocer living in New Street, Brighton. Mr Allen was out looking for a cow, and finding the sand in Park Street heavy walking, he turned off into the scrub, and had not gone far when he was startled by seeing the lifeless body of Mr Gordon lying on the ground. He at once went to the police station, and gave information to senior constable O’Donnell, who placed a guard over the body until the coroner’s warrant was received, when he conveyed it to the Marine Hotel, where it now lies awaiting inquest.’

After an inaccurate summary of Gordon's life in England – 'a native of Cotswold, Gloucestershire ... educated partly at Cambridge and partly at Glasgow University' – *The Argus* continued: 'Recently he has been very heavily in debt, and sold all his horses. He was heir to a wealthy baronetcy, and on the strength of this, it is said, very large credit was given him in business transactions. Recently he told a very intimate friend that he meant to relinquish steeplechase riding on account of the falls he had sustained. Yesterday morning he was to have paid a bill of £30, which he appears to have been unable to meet, as he was very closely run for money. At any rate, the money was not paid. As a poet he had obtained considerable repute, a volume entitled *Sea Spray and Smoke Drift* having been very favourably noticed by the colonial and British press. A new volume of poetry by Mr Gordon, entitled *Bush Ballads and Galloping Rhymes* has just been published, and the author, who was of an excitable temperament, was in a very nervous state of excitement all the day before his death on account of having been shown by the intimate friend before referred to, who is himself a poet, a review in *The Australasian* newspaper of this week, in which the newly-issued volume is very favourably criticized, and was highly pleased with the notice, which was shown him in a proof copy, and this makes his suicide so soon afterwards the more strange. The deceased usually walked home to his residence at North Brighton, but on Thursday he said he would go by the train, and at 4 o'clock parted with that intention from the literary friend already more than once referred to. Mr Gordon was an extremely temperate man, but if induced to take spirits the effect produced by a small quantity on his frame, weakened by the serious injuries he had received in the hunting field and in steeplechasing, was very great, and this was considered to account for his restlessness on Thursday night. He was a fatalist in the fullest sense of the word, and had frequently stated that on more than one occasion he had put a pistol to his temple with suicidal intentions, but was restrained by the thought of his wife, to whom he was devotedly attached.'

Hutton quotes a letter sent to Howlett-Ross from another witness nearly sixty years later who claimed he was the last known man to see Gordon and the first to find him and break the news to his wife: 'I was twenty-two years of age and was with a Mr Bignall Baker. We were looking over the fence shaken in a sea-breeze, when the poet passed with his rifle and remarked the fact that Gordon was out so early a little after six a.m. I felt it curious and said so as the butts was quite the other side of Brighton, Gordon being a Volunteer and I and my father were. I saw him go to the door of the Marine Hotel which had not yet opened. He knocked and was admitted. I still watched. In some five minutes I saw him come out and go down Park Street. Shortly after a Scot, Allen Grosse, whose business place was opposite, rushed in and said he was looking for his cow in the tea-tree on the beach and he came across a man who apparently had shot himself. I concluded and jumped on a horse and galloped down. Yes, it was Gordon, just on the left on the beach as I rode down Park Street, there lay our poet with rifle laying on him, his hat by his side, a pipe knife and tobacco inside. I saw where he had broken a bow from a tree, the forked stick he had made out of it. He was laying with his head up hill and rifle butt between his feet, and sun where the bullet had passed through the top of his head and hit in its transit the very tree he had

broken the branch from. Others then came along. I then hastened to break the sad news to his wife.'



The inquest was reported in both *The Argus* and *The Age*, 27 June 1870. The conservative *Argus* retained the conventions of court reporting, with witness statements given in the third person: 'Wm. Hugh Kelly, gardener, at Brighton stated that he knew deceased, who, with his wife, had been living as a lodger in witness's house for the last 12 months. Last saw him alive on Thursday night, the 23rd inst., from 9 up to 11 o'clock.'

The more progressive and increasingly popular *Age* gave the statements in the first person. Eye-witness accounts. *The Age* reported: 'The sad fate of Mr Adam Lindsay Gordon at Brighton, on Friday morning, was the subject of conversation in the city on Saturday morning, and some interest was felt in the inquest which was held by Mr Candler, district coroner.

'Mr Hugh Kelly, gardener, Brighton, said: I know the deceased. He has been living as a lodger, with his wife, at my house for the last twelve months. I last saw him alive on Thursday night, the 23rd inst. I saw him from nine up to eleven o'clock that night. He had been drinking before he came home, but did not take any more. He was excitable and rather quarrelsome. Deceased was in his bedroom, and the apartment was dark before I went to bed. I heard nothing of him during the night or in the morning. Deceased was always an eccentric man. He was subject to violent headaches, which he attributed to a fall from a horse.

'William Harrison, fisherman, stated: I have known the deceased for about two years. I last saw him alive on Friday morning, about half-past seven o'clock, about 100 yards from the Marine Hotel. He was going towards the beach. I passed him and nodded, but he took no notice. He was quite sober. When I nodded I thought he had a curious look, as though he was vexed. He had a rifle in his hand, like the one produced. He was carrying it straight in his hand, and was walking the usual pace.

'Mr W. P. Allen, storekeeper, Brighton, deposed: Yesterday morning, at a quarter past nine o'clock, I was looking for a cow. I went into the tea-tree at the end of Park Street, on the Brighton beach, and I saw the body of the deceased lying on the ground. Life was extinct. It was a very intricate part of the scrub and out of the view of any person.

'Michael O'Donnell, senior constable, said: Yesterday, about ten o'clock, I was informed by the last witness that he had seen a dead body in the scrub; I went with him and saw deceased lying on his back. The rifle now produced was lying between his legs with the butt between the feet, with the muzzle and the cock upwards. The piece of tea-tree produced was lying with the forked end of it on the trigger of the rifle. The ramrod and a hat were about three feet from the body. In the hat was a knife, pipe, tobacco, and a shilling. In the pockets were letters of a private nature. There were no indications of a struggle. The mouth of the deceased was blackened, and there was a wound on the back of the head, on which there was blood, and what appeared to be brain matter. The ground was saturated under the head. I observed, on a tree in a line with the

body of deceased, where the bark had been torn off as if by a ball. The body was cold when I saw it, having been apparently dead about two hours. From the direction of the bullet I think deceased must have been in a sitting position at the time the rifle was discharged.

‘Dr James P. Murray said: I have made a post mortem examination of the body. Externally there were no marks of violence, except upon the head. Round the mouth there was a certain amount of blackness and a slight quantity of blood. At the back of the head the hair was clotted with blood, and brain matter was protruding through a very extensive opening. I found the skull fractured into numerous fragments, and a quantity of bone had been blown out through the posterior opening. In the mouth the palate was fractured, and also the bones of the face. There was the course of a bullet through the base of the skull, and through the brain to the occipital bone. The organs of the body generally were healthy. The stomach was empty, and showed no sign of poisoning. The liver was slightly fatty. The cause of death was the injury described. I knew the deceased for a year, during the time which he had been residing at Brighton. He was a private gentleman, attached to literary pursuits, also to sporting and racing. I last saw him alive on Tuesday, the 21st inst. Deceased was eccentric, on the whole rational, but he was subject to excitement without adequate provocation. He was totally unable to bear spirituous liquor; a very small quantity maddened him immediately. Deceased had had several falls in steeplechasing and hunting. His skull has been fractured on one occasion, and his brain was much affected by these falls. He himself has said he was mad. The brain of deceased I believe, was injured to that extent that he might be subject to delusion, and to attacks of melancholy at times. The evidence being closed, the jury found a verdict that deceased died from a gunshot wound inflicted by himself while of unsound mind.’

In *The Real Adam Lindsay Gordon* W. Park Low records Maggie’s questioning of some of these details: ‘Gordon was a man who never drank strong drink. On the night before his death, he reached home about six or seven o’clock in time for tea, and I did not notice that he had taken any drink, and he was not quarrelsome as stated elsewhere. He did not quarrel with me and there was no one else to quarrel with. He seemed a good deal excited and restless and walked up and down the room often quoting verses and mumbling to himself. I never knew him to drink, although we always kept brandy in the house. He was not fond of playing cards and called them “the Devil’s play things.” He would buy a new pack for any special evening and when the evening’s playing was finished he would put them in the fire.’



Gordon’s funeral was reported in *The Age*, 27 June 1870: ‘The funeral took place on Saturday afternoon, and the mournful cortège was followed to the Brighton Cemetery by a large number of the friends of the deceased.’ *The Argus* added some details: ‘The funeral was very quiet, there being only one mourning coach. The principal mourners were Mrs Gordon, Major Baker, Messrs Robert and Herbert Power, and some other intimate friends of Mr Gordon.’ In her biography of Gordon in *The Australasian*, 23 December 1933, Eileen Kaye wrote that Captain Standish was

among those present. In a footnote to his revised life of Gordon Sladen recorded: 'An eye-witness, who followed the funeral, told me (in August 1933) that, as far as he could remember, between twenty and a hundred people followed it straggling. It was about three miles to the cemetery.'

In *The Real Adam Lindsay Gordon*, W. Park Low quotes Maggie as saying that although her friends did not want her to go to the funeral, she insisted. She was driven in the carriage of F. C. Goyder, the proprietor of the Melbourne stables, and brother of the South Australian Surveyor-General. In 'Adam Lindsay Gordon' in *Southerly* McCrae recalled 'one pleasant feature no heavy clods only the purest of white sand.'

Kendall was not there. In *Singer of the Dawn* Agnes Hamilton-Grey quotes George Gordon McCrae: 'I went to Gordon's cottage next day. Having been unable to find Kendall, I wrote to him from our Club (the Yorick) offering him a seat in one of the vehicles we had ordered for the funeral. Kendall failed to appear, but sent me a hurried note, alleging as the only reason for his absence the fact that he was "copperless."'

'Dear Gordon: At 4 p.m. this afternoon I haven't the money to spare, or I would attend. Indeed I am penniless. Yours truly, Henry Kendall.'

Hugh McCrae remarks in *My Father and My Father's Friends* how Kendall had addressed the letter to the dead poet. 'He then crossed out Gordon, and substituted McCrae.'

In *Singer of the Dawn* Agnes Hamilton-Grey cites George Gordon McCrae's comment on Kendall's excuse: 'I did not, for a moment, accept this in my private mind, but put down his absence to the terrible shock he had received in the death of Gordon, and the manner of it. I felt certain that had he come it would only be but to break down utterly at the grave. But he chose to lead me to believe that he could not afford the fare (pretty heavy, Brighton Cemetery being nine miles away), but the seat with us in the wagonette would not have cost him a farthing, as it was at the expense of the Club. Probably he knew all that without recognizing it; yet, to cover his absence, I suggested that he could not afford the fare.'

Mrs Hamilton-Grey offers her own explanation: 'He, Mr McCrae, died, not knowing the gruesome facts. It seems that Kendall and Gordon had passed the day before the suicide, together, both poets much depressed in hope and faith. Lindsay Gordon, the stronger of the two, and the most daring, conceived the idea of a *double suicide*, both he and Kendall to die at the same hour. They parted, both the worse for drinking. But Kendall thought of God, of his child and wife, of his mother and sisters, and conscience forbade the act. *He could not do it*. One can understand his refusal to be present at the funeral of Adam Lindsay Gordon, and what he felt about it. He told no one in Melbourne, not even his own wife.' It is an imaginative story, but quite without substantiation.

The day after the funeral, 28 June, *The Argus* ran an enthusiastic review of *Bush Ballads and Galloping Rhymes*. 30 June the *Sydney Morning Herald* ran a first leader on suicide: 'The account given of the suicide at Melbourne, committed by a late member of the South Australian Legislature, and well known in sporting circles, may produce a momentary thrill, although every

emotion in Australia is transient, and a few days are sufficient to efface the memory of deeds however fearful ...'

¶

George Riddoch recalled in Humphris and Sladen: 'I was living at Nalang Station at that time and I went down to visit my brother, the late John Riddoch of Yallum Park. Something was said about Gordon, and my brother mentioned that he had just got the news that the Esslemont business had been decided against Gordon.

'On the morning that he shot himself, I said to my brother, "Don't you think I ought to ask Gordon up, it is not safe for him to be in Melbourne after this."

'My brother said, "It's no good your asking him, he's promised to come up here soon."

'When this conversation was taking place Gordon was dead, having shot himself early in the morning, and a little later, John Riddoch got a telegram from Robert Power from Melbourne saying that Gordon had shot himself that morning.'

The Argus, 21 October 1915, reported George Riddoch telling the story at a ceremony to plant a shrub from Gordon's grave in Vansittart Park, Mount Gambier. This version has Herbert Power sending the telegram.

Castieau recorded in his diary, 25 June: 'Went to the Mechanics in the evening and read the papers. Mr Gordon a well known sporting man and a poet of some pretensions blew his brains out yesterday. This suicide has created much sensation. Mr Walstab brother of the novelist of that name was also found drowned; it is not known how he got into the water. Today a clerk in the Education office, a Mr Nicholls, was killed while following the Melbourne hounds. There has been certainly plenty of sensation since it was commenced by the attempt at murder of G. P. Smith.'

Walstab's brother Henry also died at Brighton, drowned off the jetty. *The Age* announced: 'the mania for suicide and murder is indeed upon us.'

Tenison Woods wrote: 'the dreadful news reached me of the manner in which he put an end to his career. I must say, however, that it did not surprise me. In my intercourse with him of late years I had noticed a morbid melancholy growing more upon him. My own opinion was that he had kept up appearances until pecuniary and legal embarrassments came upon him, and then gave up to despondency. His difficulties could not have been great; but he could not bear to apply to friends, or that anyone should know his real position. Those who did not know Gordon attributed his suicide to drink, but I repeat he was most temperate, and disliked the company of drinking men.'

A. H. Massina, recalling Gordon's promise to bring round a cheque the following day, said: 'I believe that Gordon shot himself because of a small financial embarrassment ... I firmly believe that because he found that he could not do what he had promised to do he took his own life. If ever there was a straightforward, honourable man, it was Adam Lindsay Gordon.'

Blackmore was devastated. Sladen in Humphris and Sladen records Blackmore's sister-in-law's saying that 'she should never forget the look of utter consternation on his face when he heard the news. He seemed stunned.' Hutton quotes W. J. Hammersley's letter to Blackmore from *The Australasian* office, 28 June: 'To tell you the truth I was not surprised. I was talking to him only two days previously when he seemed in high spirits and talked about going home to the property he was entitled to and that it was all right ... Pecuniary difficulties troubled him ... Not long ago he commenced a story for the paper and I got the first chapter from him, and had it in print but from his manner I feared that I could not rely on him to finish it. (Gordon asked for a cheque at once). I said all right, let me have the MS and you shall have it.'

Hutton writes: 'Hammersley had the impression that Gordon wanted the money but was too busy to finish. Several times he had said that he was short of cash but he would be all right some day. He was paid a higher rate than other contributors for "the few sketches he wrote for us." The penny-pinching accountant refused to pass the payments and Hammersley had to make up the money out of his own pocket.

'He found Gordon "very peculiar in his manner." He had come across him asleep on the seats at the railway station but could get nothing out of him. As a contributor he was hard to handle: "Sometimes he would come in and talk for an hour, generally when I was most busy, at others he would walk in and out and hardly speak ..."'

In his life of Gordon in *The Sydney Mail*, 20 June 1912, W. Farmer Whyte published some material he had acquired from Mrs Kelly, including an unpaid rent bill, indicative of Gordon's financial problems.

A. L. Gordon

Dr to W. H. Kelly.

37 weeks' rent at £1 per week, £37. 0. 0.

Eggs £3. 15. 8.

£40. 15. 8.

Whyte writes: 'Apparently, after Gordon's death, Mr Kelly had written to the poet's uncle in England in reference to this debt, for I find the following letter, signed R. C. H. Gordon, and dated August 31, '71:

'My Dear Mr Kelly,

'I received your letter dated 16 June, '71. It gave me great pleasure to hear from you, and to know how very kind you had been to my nephew, Lindsay Gordon, as Major Baker had told me. I will give him your thanks if I have opportunity. No cause was assigned to me for my nephew's last act. I suppose he was troubled about money; and I know of the strangeness of manner in the family. I have heard no more of Mrs Lindsay Gordon than that Mr Robt. Power sent her my little help. I am very sorry I cannot repay you more. I fear £30 is still due to you.

'Lindsay's poems are very much admired by all my friends to whom I have lent them, as truly poetical and clever. I am very much obliged to you for your nice letter.

'I remain yours truly obliged for your kindness to L. Gordon.'

However W. Park Low records in *The Real Adam Lindsay Gordon* that Maggie questioned this: ‘I had no idea Gordon was in such straits for want of money for he always kept me well supplied. Gordon paid the rent up to within a few weeks of his death, and I always paid for the eggs and milk myself, so there could not have been any outstanding accounts with the exception of two or three weeks’ rent which would be paid up at the end of the month. There was evidently some unfair business in this matter ... I know for certain the milk and eggs were paid for and I cannot believe that so much was owing for rent for I have vivid recollections of the rent being paid up to within a few weeks of his death.’

McLaren in his Gordon bibliography notes that the debts still reverberated as late as 1903, when the North Brighton Methodist Minister, John Smith, wrote to Mrs Kelly asking for assistance for Mr Spiers who had supplied Gordon with milk and eggs and was still owed £14.

Brenda Niall records in her biography *Georgiana* that George Gordon McCrae’s mother recalled how only the week before his death Gordon had visited the McCraes and read his poems to them. Niall quotes Georgiana’s letters to Edie Anderson, 4 and 13 October 1887: ‘Adam had the Aberdeen Gordon *shy* manner – but his *pride* was that of self-respect – nothing of *hauteur* in it – he was a thorough gentleman and scholar – but for want of the “push” of important persons – there was he left to the society of horsey men and scarcely ever in the company of gentlemen.’ In a notebook now in Fisher Library Georgiana copied out *The Feud* in its entirety and ‘The Old Station’, ‘the last lines penned by A. L. Gordon 1869’ beginning ‘All night I’ve heard the marsh frogs croak ...’, together with memorial poems by Henry Kendall, George Gordon McCrae, and, from the *Herald*, 24 June 1870, by C.H.W.H.



For whatever reasons, Henry Kendall did not attend the funeral. But he rapidly penned a moving, heart-felt elegy, ‘The Late Mr A. L. Gordon: In Memoriam’:

At rest! Hard by the margin of that sea
Whose sounds are mingled with his noble verse,
Now lies the shell that never more will house
The fine, strong spirit of my gifted friend.
Yea, he who flashed upon us suddenly,
A shining soul with syllables of fire,
Who sang the first great songs these lands can claim
To be their own; the one who did not seem
To know what royal place awaited him
Within the Temple of the Beautiful,
Has passed away; and we who knew him, sit
Aghast in darkness, dumb with that great grief,
Whose stature yet we cannot comprehend;
While over yonder churchyard, hearsed with pines,

The night wind sings its immemorial hymn,
And sobs above a newly-covered grave.

The bard, the scholar, and the man who lived,
That frank, that open-hearted life which keeps
The splendid fire of English chivalry
From dying out; the one who never wronged
A fellow man; the faithful friend who judged
The many, anxious to be loved of him,
By what he saw, and not by what he heard,
As lesser spirits do; the brave great soul
That never told a lie, or turned aside
To fly from danger; he, I say, was one
Of that bright company this sin-stained world
Can ill afford to lose.

They did not know,
The hundreds who had read the sturdy verse
And revelled over ringing major notes,
The mournful meaning of the undersong
Which runs through all he wrote, and often takes
The deep autumnal, half-prophetic tone
Of forest winds in March; nor did they think
That on that healthy-hearted man there lay
The wild specific curse which seems to cling
For ever to the Poet's twofold life!

To Adam Lindsay Gordon, I who laid
Two years ago on Lionel Michael's grave
A tender leaf of my regard; yea, I
Who culled a garland from the flowers of song
To place where Harpur sleeps; I, left alone,
The sad disciple of a shining band
Now gone! to Adam Lindsay Gordon's name
I dedicate these lines; and if 'tis true
That, past the darkness of the grave, the soul
Becomes omniscient, then the bard may stoop
From his high seat to take the offering,
And read it with a sigh for human friends,
In human bonds, and grey with human griefs.

And having wove and proffered this poor wreath,
 I stand to-day as lone as he who saw
 At nightfall through the glimmering moony mist,
 The last of Arthur on the wailing mere,
 And strained in vain to hear the going voice.



2 July 1870 Kendall's elegy was published in *The Australasian*. In the same issue the second of Gordon's prose 'Bush Sketches' appeared, about an incident in the Indian wars in the American west. Gordon had been working on prose pieces for *The Australasian* to generate some income; the first, 'The Cattle Station', had appeared 18 June. A third piece, a twenty-five page unpublished manuscript, 'Hunting Under the Southern Cross 1870', is preserved in the National Library of Australia, written on paper stamped 'Library S.A. Legislature.' It begins: 'The month was July.' It ends: 'I have told the story much as it happened any day of the winter of 1870 in one portion of Her Majesty's Australian possessions.' It was presumably post-dated for publication that July, and the date of the hunt is given as Saturday 15th.

The Australasian paid tribute: 'As an accomplished scholar and the writer of poetry, much of it above average merit, full justice has already been done to Mr Gordon in our columns. He was an occasional contributor to this department of *The Australasian*, both in prose and verse, and although his compositions were at times rambling and eccentric, there was a force and vigour about them that made them always most acceptable. An article on the Arab horse which appeared about a twelve-month ago was in his best style, written under the *nom de plume* of Dervish; and in verse his "Lay of the Loamshire Hunt Cup" was equal to anything of the same kind that has ever appeared in print. But Mr Gordon could not only write galloping rhymes, he was a good practical exponent of the art of horsemanship. As a steeplechase rider no one has acquired a higher reputation in this colony, and if ever a man revelled in the idea of galloping over the stiff timber fences of Victoria, Mr Gordon was that man. He has often ridden in, and won the great cross-country events, and at one steeplechase meeting, that of the Melbourne Hunt Club, in October 1868, he rode and won three steeplechases in one day – the Hunt Club Cup, on Major Baker's Babbler; the Metropolitan steeplechase, on Viking; and the Selling steeplechase, on his own horse Cadger. At the subsequent VRC Spring Meeting, he won the steeplechase on Viking, beating Babbler, Ingleside and Western. At Ballarat he has ridden many a cross-country winner, and it was there, that in December 1865, he won the steeplechase, on Ballarat, the celebrated steeplechase horse, which he soon after sold to Mr Watson, and in whose hands the horse acquired so great a name. Mr Gordon was more a bold and resolute rider than what would be termed a finished horseman. No man could take every ounce out of a horse better than he could, and no man could tell a horse in more unmistakable language that a rider with an iron will and unflinching determination was on his back. If he had a weakness, it was for forcing the pace, and picking out the biggest panel; and if he had a failing as a jockey, it was at the finish of a race,

where fine hands and artistic riding are often called into requisition. Then only was he inferior to such men as Mr Mount, Johnsson, or Wakefield. His tall spare figure, and somewhat eccentric get up, were familiar to all lovers of steeplechasing in this colony, and no man that ever rode here was a greater public favourite, and enjoyed public confidence more than he did. "Here comes Gordon" was a common expression, as, generally last from the saddling paddock, he was seen cantering down the course. We have said he was usually the last from the saddling-paddock; and as showing how some minds are actuated by trivial circumstances, we have been informed more than once by him that it was a rule he made always to be "last out" when he was going to ride a steeplechase. His manner of sitting a horse over a big fence was quite unique, and no one who had once witnessed his peculiar habit of throwing himself back in the saddle as the horse surmounted the obstacle, could ever afterwards mistake him. As a rider to hounds he was always there, or thereabouts, no matter how stiff a country had to be crossed, the stiffer the better for him; but it seemed to us that he enjoyed hunting only for riding's sake and was equally as happy whether the hounds were racing after a deer or a drag, so long as they went fast enough, and the timber was big enough to test the cleverness of the horses and the pluck of their riders. It was in the steeplechase his heart was set, and as a steeplechase rider he will be long remembered. Latterly, Mr Gordon had received some severe falls, by which he was very much shaken, more particularly when he was riding Prince Rupert in the VRC steeplechase last autumn, when he lay a long time stunned and bleeding. His head was then much affected, and it cannot be doubted that the repeated falls he has sustained must have done very serious harm to his constitution, notwithstanding it was of the most robust. No man led a more active, healthy, and temperate life, as he was a great walker and an excellent swimmer, and could endure any amount of fatigue. His reputation as a rider extended even to the old country, where it was reported in *The Field* that there was only one man in Australia who could sit a buck-jumper, and that was Mr Gordon. Certainly it was an amusement he was very partial to, and one in which he generally came off with the upper hand.'

The same issue if *The Australasian* reprinted *The Argus* report on the suicide, and also carried an advertisement: 'Just published, Price 5s. BUSH BALLADS AND GALLOPING RHYMES, by the late A. L. Gordon, Esq., Author of *Ashtaroth*, *Sea Spray* and *Smoke Drift*. Also a few copies of *Ashtaroth*. Price 5s. CLARSON, MASSINA, and Co., Publishers.' Also in that issue were the first part of Clarke's 'The Settler in Tasmania Fifty Years Ago,' and an article on 'Increase of Suicides' reprinted from the *New York Post*.

Kendall's elegy was reprinted in the *South Australian Advertiser* and in the *Town and Country Journal*. Seven months later *Town and Country* published Kendall's recollections of Gordon in 'A Colonial Literary Club': 'Cut off as he was in the zenith of his splendid powers, snatched away on the threshold of fame, fortune, and happiness, destroyed by the same hand that gave us the too insufficient evidences left of his superb faculties, how mournfully pertinent are these lines, the last from his pen: -

'Child! can I tell where the garlands go?

'Can I say where the lost leaves veer

‘On the brown-burnt banks, when the wild winds blow,
 ‘When they drift through the dead-wood drear?
 ‘Girl! when the garlands of next year glow,
 ‘You may gather again, my dear –
 ‘But *I* go where the last year’s lost leaves go
 ‘At the falling of the year.’

‘At the “falling of the year” he went, and we who admired and loved him so much can only come with poor white flowers like this, and strew them with faltering hands upon his grave.’

George Gordon McCrae produced an elegy with comparable rapidity, which Clarke published in the *Australian Journal*, August 1870. In the same issue the *Journal* declared: ‘A brother poet has undertaken the task of supplying the *Australian Journal* with a short memoir of the departed; but, owing to some unexplained cause, it has not come to hand. Under these circumstances, we extract from *The Australasian* the following tribute to the memory of the deceased.’

Whether Clarke himself wrote a tribute to Gordon’s memory at this time is unclear; he may have been responsible for one of the unsigned reports on the poet’s death in *The Argus* or *The Australasian* or the *Australian Journal*. As editor of the *Australian Journal* he was certainly responsible for announcing Gordon’s death and for reprinting in the July issue the letter first published in *The Australasian* the previous year from the English writer G. J. Whyte-Melville, praising Gordon’s *Sea Spray and Smoke Drift*.

If Clarke didn’t write anything, it was not from lack of feeling. Hamilton Mackinnon records: ‘To those who knew Gordon and Clarke intimately, the keen sympathy of genius existing between them was easily understood, for there was, despite many outward differences of manner, a wonderful similarity in their two natures. Both were morbidly sensitive; both broodingly pathetic; both sarcastically humorous; both socially reckless; both literary Bohemians of the purest water – sons of genius and children of impulse. That the deep feeling for the dead poet and friend lasted till death with Marcus Clarke was evidenced by his frequently repeating when in dejected spirits those pathetically regretful lines of “The Sick Stockrider”:

‘I’ve had my share of pastime, and I’ve done my share of toil,
 ‘And life is short – the longest life a span;
 ‘I care not now to tarry for the corn or for the oil,
 ‘Or for the wine that maketh glad the heart of man.
 ‘For good undone and gifts misspent and resolutions vain,
 ‘’Tis somewhat late to trouble. This I know –
 ‘I should live the same life over, if I had to live again;
 ‘And the chances are I go where most men go.

‘And to see him seated at the piano humming these lines to his own accompaniment, while the tears kept rolling down his cheeks, was proof enough that the tender chords of a beloved memory were being struck, and that the living son of genius mourned for his dead brother as only genius can mourn.’



Maggie Gordon returned to Robe, where her father was still living. W. Park Low records in *The Real Adam Lindsay Gordon* that she told him: ‘My friend, Mrs Bradshaw Young, travelled all the way from Robe as soon as she heard the sad news and took me away. Mr Riddoch, who was ever ready to help in any way he could, fearing I would be short of ready cash, wired me £10 for incidental expenses. I packed some travelling trunks with our few possessions – one box being especially reserved for Gordon’s belongings, his riding outfit and so on. They were all to be sent round to Robe by boat, but I never saw or heard any more of the box of Gordon’s things. It was either kept back by someone who knew the value of the contents, or else it went astray on the voyage. At any rate, it was a great loss to me, as it contained many things of Gordon’s that I treasured.’

Possibly the unfinished manuscript of *Penthesilea* disappeared on the journey, presumably stolen. But Park Low records that Maggie told him she retained Gordon’s silver mounted whip that he had won so many races with, together with his short boot top leggings, his double bit, curb and double bridle and various other small items.

Maggie worked as a seamstress in Robe for the next three years. 19 March 1873 she married Peter Low at the residence of Mr Bradshaw Young in Robe. Low, a Scotsman employed in the Survey Department, was later employed by John Riddoch for more than twenty years. They had four sons and three daughters. She and her son W. Park Low preserved an extensive collection of press cuttings relating to Gordon, together with other memorabilia, now in the State Library of South Australia. C. D. Mackellar recalled: ‘Round the walls of her sitting-room were various of Gordon’s poems printed on slips, framed and glazed, and probably they first were printed in this form, and it is possible that some in this form may have escaped notice. She had all the editions of his poems. Also on the walls hung pen and ink sketches done by him, principally of horses or bush scenes; and as well his smoking cap, jockey cap, whips, bat, spurs, etc.’

Other relics were religiously preserved. 30 June 1908 the *Bendigo Advertiser* ran an interview with William Trainor: ‘The old man lit his pipe, and, moving some harness and brushes off a large tin trunk in his room, he raised the lid, and hauled out some leather trappings.

“Do you know what these are?” he said. “They’re Gordon’s saddle-bags. He gave them to me when he was going away once.

“He said, ‘Billy, I want to give you something to remember me by.’

“I said, ‘Oh, I don’t need anything to remember you by, Gordon.’

“He then offered me the copyright of his poems, but he found there was no copyright of them, so he left his saddle-bags with me.”

Some forty-two years later, 23 May 1950, the *Herald* reported that Tommy Trainor ‘Has The Poet Gordon’s Saddle-Bag’: ‘I have the saddle-bag at home. My father gave it to me. I don’t know where it is exactly, but Mum knows. She looks after things like that.’

The Record, 25 June 1910, reported on ‘Gordon’s stockwhip after sixty years’: ‘An old colonist named Mrs Annie Lauder ... is the possessor of this most interesting relic. We have seen it, and it is in a wonderful state of preservation. It was made by Gordon, Johnnie Bright and

Edward Bright, brothers of Mrs Lauder ... The stockwhip is splendidly made from the raw green hide of a wild bullock, and judges say that it is a work of art. Miss Bright was always the custodian of the whip, as Gordon more frequently used a heavier one.'

27 February 1912 *The Argus* reported: 'Some interesting mementoes of the poet Gordon were procured last week by Mr W. Farmer Whyte, who visited Brighton ... These had been in the possession of the lady with whom Gordon lodged at the time of his death, and include the poet's bank-book (which, contrary to the general belief shows that he was at one time possessed of considerable means), some of Gordon's verses that have never been published, and portions of the original draft of his "Rhyme of Joyous Garde"... Included among the interesting mementoes secured is a green-hide riding whip, said to have been made by the poet himself, and used in some of his steeplechase rides, made famous in his verses.'

In 'The Yorick: 1. – Gordon and his Friends', *Bulletin*, 30 January 1929, Hugh McCrae wrote: 'Born into this world six years after the Centaur Laureate's death, I have yet been able to see something of him, tangible and real; a lock of hair forming a ring upon white paper. From my father, this ring passed to Grace Jennings Carmichael; from Grace Jennings to God-knows-whom. I remember a Mrs Lauder who sent McCrae honey out of the country accompanied by letters (interminably long) all about Gordon; she it was who had cropped and saved the treasured curl.'

The *Sun-News Pictorial* reported, 23 September 1935: 'The case in which Adam Lindsay Gordon carried his racing gear will be placed among the other relics of the poet in the Gordon Memorial Cottage at Ballarat today. The case was presented by the Melbourne jockey, R. Lewis.' It is now held in the Gold Museum at Ballarat.

Attempts to preserve the house at 10 Lewis Street, Brighton, where Gordon and his wife had lived were unsuccessful. When it was demolished in 1946, Dr Cyril Goode salvaged the 25,000 bricks and transported them to his home at Newport. He had hoped to have the house re-erected, but the Mayor of Brighton declared: 'A man who is behind in his rent is not worth remembering.' *The Wayfarer*, 8 December 2008, reported that the bricks are currently stored on an industrial estate at Dandenong.

The *Herald*, 9 November 1946, reporting on the attempt to preserve the house, noted 'even the stretcher on which it is said the dead poet was carried from the beach at Middle Brighton has been presented to the Knight Grand Cheese of the Bread and Cheese Club (Mr J. K. Moir) for preservation.'

A proposal to preserve the outbuilding of the Marine Hotel at Brighton, in which his body had lain, was similarly unsuccessful. But his association with the Marine Hotel was commemorated by a plaque: 'Adam Lindsay Gordon Poet and Horseman tethered his horse to this hitching post during his residence in Brighton 1869–70. A shining soul with syllables of fire who sang the first great songs these lands can claim (Kendall). Preserved and dedicated to his memory by the United Licensed Victuallers Association 20th October 1945.' There is another memorial on two rocks in the Brighton Town Hall gardens with a relief portrait of Gordon, the crests of the Gordon family and of the City of Brighton, together with a relief of Gordon on horseback and the inscription 'Adam Lindsay Gordon, pioneer poet and horseman, born in the Azores 18 October

1833; died at Brighton 24 June 1870. This memorial tribute to Gordon to mark his residence in Brighton 1868–1870.’ There are also lines from his poems. The J. K. Moir collection in the State Library of Victoria has a photograph of a plaque on the Toby Tavern, reputed to have been frequented by Gordon and Kendall.

In 1962, Pacini records, a whip belonging to Gordon was presented to the Victoria Racing Club.



Another writer who died in June 1870 was Charles Dickens. Clarke wrote an appraisal of him in *The Argus*, 8 July: ‘He is essentially a man of the people, and he expresses better than any other writer of his time the thoughts, feelings, and sentiments of the average *bourgeois*. Born and reared in the “middle class,” his books are the reflex of the practical English life of the nineteenth century, and the secret of his fame lies in the fact that he painted men and manners, not as they should be, but as they are. His romance was the romance of reality ...’

6 August 1870 Clarke demonstrated his own commitment to the romance of reality with the publication of ‘An Up Country Township’ in *The Australasian*. Mackinnon retitled it ‘Bullocktown (Glenorchy)’ for the *Austral* edition, naming the township on which it is based. The first of a dozen Bullocktown stories based on Clarke’s time at Swinton and Ledcourt stations, it was a pioneering attempt to capture the reality of Australian social conditions for literature. It was followed on 20 August by ‘How the Circus Came to Bullocktown,’ and on 5 November by ‘A Mining Township’ (later reprinted as ‘Grumbler’s Gully’), based on Pleasant Creek, the mining settlement near Stawell. The experience safely behind him, Clarke could now draw on this material, and he did so over the years to come. ‘A Conscientious Stranger: A Bullocktown Idyll’ was one of the last stories he wrote, appearing in the *Burra Record*, 23 December 1881, four months after he died.



Two weeks after Gordon’s death, Kendall resigned from the Yorick Club, Johnson records. His Melbourne period was coming to an end. But before he left he achieved some public recognition.

1 August 1870 *The Argus* reported: ‘We have received from the publishers, Messrs Lee and Kaye, a song written expressly for and dedicated to Mrs Cutter by Mr G. B. Allen, entitled “A Wild Night,” the words by Henry Kendall. The melody is simple and appropriate, and when sung as we heard it, by the lady to whom it is dedicated, the effect is extremely fine. 4 August *The Argus* reported: ‘The concert given last evening at the town hall, Prahran, in aid of the St Kilda and South Yarra Ladies’ Benevolent Societies, was attended by a large and fashionable audience ... Mrs Cutter, who at first appeared to be in scarcely as good voice as usual, sang a simple but expressive ballad, composed expressly for her by Mr G. B. Allen. The melody, though suited to the words, which were by Mr Henry Kendall, was not marked by much originality, but as it was admirably rendered Mrs Cutter was enthusiastically encored, although there were some who

freely confessed their opinion that the ballad was not so well calculated to display the fine quality of her voice as others she has attempted.'

More significant was the commission Kendall received for 'Euterpe: An Ode to Music'. He wrote proudly to J. Sheridan Moore, 5 August 1876: 'When Horsley was selected to compose the Cantata in celebration of the opening of the new Town Hall at Melbourne, I was unanimously selected to write the words. Gordon, and other aspirants, failed in the matter.'

Charles Horsley, born in London in 1822 and a friend of Mendelssohn, had provided the music for Richard Horne's lyric masque *The South Sea Sisters* at the opening of the Intercolonial Exhibition in Melbourne in 1866. In May 1867 he was declared bankrupt. After a period in Sydney he returned to Melbourne in 1870, where he lived an erratic existence in one boarding house after another. He returned to England in 1871, and died in New York in 1876. He was a member of the Yorick.

Horsley wrote to Kendall: 'My idea, you are aware is, you should write something having reference to Victoria, past, present and future, but it should not be a mere *pièce d'occasion* but be adapted for performance in England, America, and elsewhere where the Anglo-Saxons congregate. Unfortunately there is nothing very poetical in the Town Hall, the bricks and mortar are not suggestive of fair bowers and beautiful scenery but I am sure to find you thinking of something lyrical, and the undoubted influence the building will have on the progress of Music in Australia might be a theme worthy of your pen. Look at Dryden's "Ode on S. Cecilia's Day," and imitate or follow "glorious John" in his ideas of the Art. Let the rhythm be various – blank verse for songs etc. I will arrange the words into the divisions you name and would prefer to do so. But my instructions to you savour mightily of supplying Newcastle with coals. I shall be home here tomorrow (Wednesday) evening and be delighted to see you, when over a glass of grog we might get ideas.'

9 August 1870 'Euterpe' was performed at the opening of the new Melbourne Town Hall, and printed in the festival programme. Clarke records the occasion in his *History*: 'At the opening, in August, a ball was given by Mr Amess to 4,000 of the citizens, and a musical festival, at which was produced a cantata, written by C. E. Horsley with words by H. Kendall.' 10 August *The Argus* reported: 'At length, after 20 months of building, the new Town Hall of Melbourne, by very far the finest municipal building in Australia, has been opened to the public. The inaugural ceremony took place last evening, under circumstances which will impress it indelibly upon the memories of those present. As our readers are aware, the present mayor of Melbourne, Mr Samuel Amess, undertook that the whole expense of the ceremonial and accompanying festivities should be borne by himself, and he forthwith cast about for the means of giving proper *éclat* to the occasion. He eventually resolved that there should be a concert, to be followed by a fancy ball, and it was the former which occurred last night. To mark the event still more, he took advantage of the presence in the colony of Mr Henry Kendall, who has already made his mark in Australian poetical literature, and of Mr C. E. Horsley, whose great abilities as a musical composer have been recognized in Australia as well as in Europe, to obtain from them the words and music of the opening cantata.'

A soprano aria 'Ah and When that Meek Eyed Maiden' from *Euterpe*, words by Kendall and music by Horsley, was published for the composer by W. H. Glen, Collins Street East, price three shillings. 'Euterpe' was performed again at the Crystal Palace in London in 1876.



17 August *The Argus* reported: 'A meeting of the friends and admirers of Messrs Horsley and Kendall was held last night at Scott's Hotel, for the purpose of taking steps to recognize the talent displayed by them in the cantata 'Euterpe' ... that a complimentary concert be given to Messrs Horsley and Kendall and that they share in the proceeds thereof in the same proportions as they did in writing the cantata ... that 'Euterpe' be the principal feature in the programme ...'

29 August *The Argus* reported: 'The Horsley and Kendall Benefit Concert. It is likely that the evening of Saturday, the 27th August, will be long remembered as the occasion on which the largest number of paying people ever assembled together in this city for the purpose of listening to a musical entertainment ... It was literally a great concert, and was on the whole about one hour too long.'

Then once again Kendall was involved in a public dispute. 5 September *The Australasian* published another version of "Euterpe": 'Note. – The following ode was written with a view to its being set to music by Mr Horsley, but as its theme was not treated in accordance with the composer's directions, it was thrown aside for the libretto already published.'

Horsley responded with a letter to *The Argus*: 'In this morning's issue of *The Australasian* there occurs such an extraordinary mistake on the part of Mr Kendall that, in justice to me, I trust I shall not have to wait a week for its contradiction. The editor of *The Australasian* has published a second version of "Euterpe" with a head-note stating that the words were submitted to me and I rejected on account of their not being suited to my ideas. With the exception of four lines (in strophe IV of to-day's publication) commencing "Even as a wondrous woman," and ending with the word "strain," this poem has, until now, never been seen by me, and I have good reason to believe that it has been written subsequently to the production of my music. However this may be, the poem is quite new to me, and was never, in any form, "submitted" to my approval. Mr Kendall wrote two odes for the Town Hall. The first was purely local, and contained many references to the names and traditions or the Australian aborigines. Having already composed music on this subject in my ode "The South Sea Sisters," to poetry by Mr R. H. Horne, I declined to accept Mr Kendall's work, and at his own request the MS was burnt in my room. I then gave him a sketch of what I wanted. Hence the first version of "Euterpe." In a letter to me, dated 18th May last, Mr Kendall, amongst other things, writes: "The words were written to order; the idea was yours, and I followed it. The character of the thing, and its treatment, were suggested by you, and, in a docile spirit, I did my best to follow your views." Such is the origin of "Euterpe" as I have set it to music; but that I ever saw or knew of the version put before the public today is a statement on the part of Mr Kendall so utterly at variance with the facts of the case, that your publication of this will greatly oblige.'

The following day *The Argus* published a response from Kendall: ‘Referring to Mr Horsley’s astonishing letter in *The Argus* of this morning, I trust you will allow me to deny emphatically his statement that the alleged “second version of Euterpe,” published in the current *Australasian*, is headed by an assertion that its words were “submitted to him, and rejected on account of their not being suited to his ideas.” In making this public contradiction, I have to express a hope that Mr Horsley’s singular epistle is the outflow of some action upon what he has heard, rather than upon what he has read; but, be that as it may, it is clear that his statements are fictions from beginning to end. This fact is to be regretted all the more, because it is evident that Mr Horsley can write an amusing letter without the aid of assertions not founded on facts.’

8 September *The Argus* published Horsley’s reply: ‘Absence from town yesterday prevented an earlier reply to Mr Kendall’s letter. Most distinctly I repeat that the version of “Euterpe” published in last week’s *Australasian* was never seen by me until it appeared in that journal. The introduction to that version states “The following ode was written with a view to its being set to music by Mr Horsley” and at page 300, under the heading, “Music and the Opera,” it is spoken of as “the original draft.” If it were the original draft, and had been written for me to set to music, why was it not submitted for my approval? Does Mr Kendall habitually write libretti for the pleasure of throwing them aside unseen by those alone competent to decide as to their suitability? As to the wretched quibble that the heading does not contain a statement that this latest version was submitted to me, I can only say that, as a fine specimen of hair splitting, it excites my warmest admiration. But I submit that any person reading the two paragraphs I have referred to would naturally, or even necessarily, infer that the new version was submitted to and disapproved of by me. I have no wish to enter into any controversy on the subject of “Euterpe” with Mr Kendall; but I would call attention to the fact that, although he characterizes my statements as “fictions from beginning to end,” yet he has not the manliness to deny any one of them specifically. However, they can be easily substantiated by a reference to Mr Kendall’s own letters, and the independent testimony of reliable witnesses. I enclose for your perusal a copy of Mr Kendall’s letter of the 18th May (the original is in my possession), so that you may judge of the amount of fiction contained in my extract. In conclusion, from my lengthened experience, I may state that in following out my ideas in “Euterpe,” Mr Kendall has achieved a fair amount of success as a librettist, for which, I doubt not, he has already received the reward his merits.’

The editor of *The Argus* commented: ‘Some of Mr Horsley’s previous statements are fully borne out by the copies of letters enclosed.’

18 September Kendall wrote to James Smith asking for a copies of *The Australasian* with ‘The Late Mr A. L. Gordon: In memoriam’ and his ‘Euterpe’ ode: ‘I do not possess MSS of them, and I should hardly like to lose them.’

The proceedings of the benefit concert dragged on through a number of committee meetings, and payment was slow in coming. 17 September 1870 *Touchstone* ran a double-page spread cartoon ‘Waiting for the Crumbs. Respectfully dedicated to the Horsley and Kendall Complimentary Benefit Committee.’ It portrayed Kendall begging as a dog and Horsley as a

parrot. A set of three verses also entitled 'Waiting for the Crumbs' accompanied it. 26 September *The Argus* reported that Horsley received £102 13s. 9d. and Kendall £51 7s. 9d.

10 October *The Argus* reported: 'Some discussion ensued as to whether Mr Kendall's request that the names of persons who had received tickets to sell but had not accounted for the whole of them satisfactorily should be published in the papers should be acceded to or not, and it was ultimately resolved not to publish the names at present.'

As well as Horsley, composers who have set Kendall's work to music include George Peck, Joseph Summers, Charles Packer, Paola Giorza, Christian Helleman, Mirrie Hill [Richard Kent], G. B. Allen, Arthur Massey, Varney Monk, Miriam Hyde, John Douglas Gordon, Philip Norman, Alfred Hill and Eric Gross.



3 August 1870 the *Sydney Illustrated News* announced: 'Several friends of the late Mr A. L. Gordon, the well-known steeplechase rider and poet, have started a subscription, with the twofold object of erecting a monument over the grave of the deceased and of making provision for his widow. Major Baker is the treasurer of the fund; but donations will also be received by the Messers Power, Messers Gordon and Gotch, and the editors of the Melbourne newspapers.'

15 October 1870 *The Australasian* reported: 'The monument raised in memory of the late Adam Lindsay Gordon is now finished. It is erected over his remains in the picturesque cemetery of Brighton, and is placed in a conspicuous position by the main avenue, on a gently sloping rise, fanned by the sea-breeze, and looking towards the setting sun.

'The monument, although unpretentious, is a handsome one, consisting of a massive bluestone base, diamond-hammered on all faces with boldly tooled margin drafts, and chamfer. Upon this base rests a finely rubbed bluestone pedestal, with handsomely moulded plinth. Upon each face of the pedestal die a polished white marble tablet is affixed, bearing the inscriptions.

'The lettering is very skilfully and clearly executed, while the inscriptions simply record the titles of the poet's works. From a moulded base, peculiar to that order, a fluted Doric column rises to the height of 10 feet 6 inches above the ground. It is then broken off, to complete the sad picture of the poet's life, so rudely shattered by death in the day of its perfection and strength. The whole is finished with a tastefully-carved wreath of bay leaves, executed in white marble. All the bluestone used in the monument is very finely rubbed, and the contrast between it and the white marble sparingly introduced is very pleasing.

'The work, we may add, has been carried out to the complete satisfaction of the memorial committee by Mr J. Simmonds, of this city; and it is intended, when the funds are available, to enclose the monument with appropriate railings. For this purpose about £30 will be needed, but as the colonies abound with those who can appreciate that rare blending of bodily and mental vigour – typical of Australia – seen in our poet's life, we do not doubt that this sum will be quickly forthcoming. We cannot fail to miss the well-known yellow and black on the field today of the boldest of our steeplechase riders, and our greatest – we had almost said our only – national poet,

and the chord touched in these concluding lines, written shortly before his death, may find an echo in the hearts of many who once enjoyed the sunshine of his friendship:

‘A little season of love and laughter,
 ‘Of light and life, and pleasure and pain,
 ‘And a horror of outer darkness after,
 ‘And dust returneth to dust again.
 ‘Then the lesser life shall be as the greater,
 ‘And the lover of light shall join the hater,
 ‘And the one thing cometh sooner or later,
 ‘And no one knoweth the loss or gain.’

The lines were from ‘The Swimmer’.

In ‘The Sick Stockrider’ Gordon had written ‘Let me slumber in the hollow where the wattle blossoms wave’. In 1870 a black wattle was planted over the grave by Mrs Elizabeth A. Lauder, who, as Annie Bright, had known him in South Australia. When it died two more were planted. Over the next thirty years she tended the grave, and distributed seeds from the wattle and its successors for planting to Victorian schools. J. K. Moir sent out 2000 packages of thirty seeds each all over Australia. A century later a seedling was planted at Gordon’s old school in Worcester.

18 June 1892 J. Howlett-Ross wrote to *The Australasian*: ‘Friday, the 24th inst. is the anniversary of the death of A. L. Gordon, and, with your permission, I would like to say to lovers of the poet that I purpose on the following Saturday, the 25th inst. placing upon his grave in the Brighton cemetery a wreath of English wild flowers, which I have brought from England at the special request of the lady who was, perhaps, the direct cause of Gordon leaving England as and when he did ... Knowing that I was returning to Melbourne, she gathered and weaved a wreath of English wild flowers, and asked me to place them on the grave of one who memory is still dear to her, the sweet incense of dear dead days.’ *The Argus* duly reported the ceremony, 27 June 1892: ‘Reminiscences of the poet were exchanged, and verses and letters in Gordon’s hand were exhibited, most of them embellished with the little sketches of sporting scenes which he was fond of inserting.’ Among those present were Shillinglaw, W. H. Kelly and his wife.

12 September 1910 *The Argus* reported a pilgrimage to Gordon’s grave. It became an annual event, with an attendance of 4000 by 1921. The custom has now been revived by the Adam Lindsay Gordon Commemorative Committee. Their journal, *The Wayfarer*, 9 March 2009, records how in 1911 a public meeting was held in Melbourne to commemorate Gordon with a statue. Some twenty years later, 30 October 1932, a statue of Gordon by Paul R. Montford was unveiled in Spring Street, Melbourne. 11 May 1934 a bronze bust of Gordon by Kathleen Scott, widow of Scott of the Antarctic, later Lady Hilton Young, was unveiled in Poets’ Corner in Westminster Abbey. A copy in the sculptor’s personal collection cast from the same mould was presented to the Commonwealth of Australia by her second husband, Lord Kennet, in 1950. Joan Kerr records: ‘He wanted it to go to Australia House in London until dissuaded, then to Parliament House, Canberra. Being more reluctant than the English to make a national hero of a

poet, Australian officialdom put it in the library ...’ A replication of the Westminster Abbey bust was unveiled at Penola in 2005. And 26 October 1941 a bust of Gordon by Wallace Anderson was placed in the Ballarat Botanical Gardens at the corner of Sturt and Lyons Streets.



McLaren quotes a letter from Major Baker to Maggie just before he returned to England in October 1870: ‘Regarding the late poor Mr Gordon’s property in South Australia. Mr Riddoch as also the agents told Major Baker that the mortgage exceeded its present value, so therefore nothing could have accrued therefrom. Major Baker begs to say that he leaves for England tomorrow, and on arriving there he will not fail to lay before poor Mr Gordon’s uncle the various claims that are unsettled.’

Britain had now withdrawn its last regiments from Australia. Clarke’s *History* records: ‘The war cloud which burst in Europe into hostilities between Germany and France caused the recall of the English troops stationed in the Australian colonies. The 14th and 18th Regiments were concentrated early in the year in Melbourne, and the last soldier left Victoria in the transport *Corona* in August. General Chute and his staff departed on 15th October, amid an assemblage of 1500 people. Children from the industrial schools now occupy the barracks of the soldiers.’

W. Park Low’s papers preserve a letter Baker wrote to Maggie from the Army and Navy Club in London, 23 February 1871: ‘I have, as I promised you, done my utmost to get your late husband’s relations to come forward and assist you: I am sorry though to say that they have not responded to the call in as liberal a manner as I expected: the account that your late husband’s uncle writes and tells me that can be subscribed in the family for your benefit is £80 which will be duly submitted by him to Mr Robert Power: beyond that sum he had sent £10 as part payment of the sum due to Kelly with whom you were lodging for some time prior to that sad event taking place.

‘You will doubtless have heard from Mr Power on the subject.

‘Trusting that you are comfortably located at present and that everything has been done to ensure your happiness which I feel convinced is the case knowing in whose hands your affairs are.’

The Esslemont estate remained in the hands of Mrs Wolrige and passed into the hands of her second son, John. Her first son, Colonel Robert Gordon-Gilmour, married Lady Susan Lygon, sister to the 7th Earl Beauchamp of Madresfield Court in Worcestershire. ‘Go out and govern New South Wales,’ Hilaire Belloc wrote of Beauchamp. He did, and it was Beauchamp who while there paid for Henry Lawson and his wife to get to England. Lawson saw this as his only hope of success, writing in ‘Pursuing Literature in Australia’, *Bulletin*, 21 January 1899: ‘My advice to any young Australian writer whose talents have been recognized, would be to go steerage, stow away, swim, and seek London, Yankeeland, or Timbuctoo – rather than stay in Australia till his genius turned to gall, or beer. Or, failing this – and still in the interests of human

nature and literature – to study elementary anatomy, especially as applies to the cranium, and then shoot himself carefully with the aid of a looking-glass.’

Lawson had Gordon in mind. Beauchamp himself had to leave England and live in Italy after a homosexual scandal. His memory is preserved in the Beauchamp Hotel in Sydney’s Oxford Street. He and his family are in part the model for Evelyn Waugh’s *Brideshead Revisited*.



John Buckley Castieau joined the Yorick Club in mid-1870. Born in Hampshire in 1831, he had migrated to Australia in 1852. He had theatrical and literary interests, and occasionally contributed to the *Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, the local paper servicing Beechworth, where he became prison governor in 1856. In 1869 he became governor of Melbourne gaol. The Hotel Castieau, Birnie called it. Castieau’s diary records his regular visits to the Yorick, sometimes to read the papers, sometimes to play cribbage and lose money, and sometimes to talk to other members such as the legal figures Alfred Wyatt, James Duerdin, and John Ogier, the old Etonian barrister and one time president of the Cambridge Union, the literary medicos Patrick Moloney and J. E. Neild, and the writers, editors, journalists and law reporters George Levey, Andrew Semple, Alfred Telo, J. J. Shillinglaw, George Walstab, Henry Keiley, Jardine Smith, William McKinley, Edmond Harrison and, occasionally, Marcus Clarke.

Castieau wrote in his diary, 11 July: ‘I went to the Yorick Club and said “how do you do” to a few of the members who were present. Ogier was playing Bezique with Mr McKinley the law reporter of *The Argus* and four or five other men were reading the papers.

‘Rawlings showed me through the place which is comfortable but certainly not pretentious, it is open from nine a.m. till two a.m. so that the members have always got a comfortable place to go and read, write or chat as disposition or opportunity invites them.’

20 July 1870 the Yorick Club foundation member Gerald Henry Supple was brought to trial. Castieau was in court and recorded in his diary: ‘Mr Higinbotham spoke for two hours and made a most effective address endeavouring to convince the jury Supple was insane and quite unaccountable for his actions. A large number of witnesses were called for the defence and proved the prisoner had been very eccentric in his conduct. The judge summed up and laid down the law, that if the prisoner knew when he attacked Smith he was offending against the law he was accountable for his acts. He requested the jury if they found the prisoner guilty to state whether the pistol went off by accident or not. A verdict of guilty was returned and the jury added that in their opinion the pistol was discharged by accident. The chief justice who presided then reserved the point for the consideration of the full bench as to whether the offence amounted to murder or manslaughter.

‘The jury retired about ten o’clock and did not bring in their verdict till past midnight. I was very unwell during the day and was very tired before it was over. I was in the court for more than fourteen hours. Told today that the reason Mr Aspinall did not assist in the defence of Supple was that he had just become insolvent and filed his schedule.’

8 September: 'Went to the Mechanics and then to the Yorick in the evening. Paid 2/6 for a chance in a raffle for a portfolio of lithographs of Guérard's Australian Scenery, they belong to Shillinglaw who wants to dispose of it before he leaves Melbourne. I expect he is rather hard up just now.'

9 September: 'Called at the Yorick Club, there I had a long chat and did not get away till past ten o'clock. Shillinglaw, Semple, a reporter from *The Argus*, and one or two others were there and we chatted away in very friendly style. There is a nasty scandal about Rawlings who has for a long time regularly sat on the city bench as a magistrate and whose constant attendance has been more than once commented upon. I always thought Rawlings was waiting in expectation of being made a police magistrate. While the grass grows the steed starves and Rawlings has been hard up. He was and is hon. treasurer to the Royal Society and lately there has been a cry out from the members for him to settle. This he has not done and the circumstances appeared in one of the papers. Rawlings sat on the bench as usual and *The Argus* commented on the bad taste he displayed in so doing.

'Yesterday the poor fellow was picked up in the Botanical Gardens apparently suffering from strychnine, he was conveyed to the hospital where he lies dangerously ill. He denies having taken the poison but says he had some strychnine in his pocket which he had purchased to destroy vermin and some of which might have got mixed up with some biscuits which he had eaten, poor fellow. This story does not seem one that can easily be credited.'

15 September: 'The Supreme Court sittings commenced this morning; Supple was brought up for sentence. Supple made a very telling speech and gave a little homily on the prevalence of slander in this colony and the evils arising from it. He spoke very calmly and collectedly and expressed his anxiety to leave this country and that he should be glad to do so even through the gate of death. In the course of his address Supple hit very hard at George Paton Smith and at the press. The Chief Justice sentenced Supple to death in the usual manner. In consideration of Supple's blindness I led him out of court, then he was taken to the gaol. Dressed in prison clothing and ironed, all through he seemed to display the exultation of a martyr glorious in suffering for a good cause.'

7 October: 'Much excitement about Supple's case. The efforts of his friends proved successful in obtaining a reprieve on the ground that an appeal might be made to the Privy Council as to the legality of his conviction.

'Mr Ellis the acting sheriff informed Supple of the reprieve and he (Supple) seemed very pleased and expressed himself thankful for the sake of his sisters and for himself also, for, said he "as a matter of taste, I prefer not being hanged."

'In the evening I went to the Yorick and had a chat with Mr Semple about Supple. I like Semple very much and he appears to take to me very well. He has worked very hard for Supple and is of course highly pleased with the result.'

27 October: 'This was the day fixed for the trial of Supple for shooting at G. P. Smith; the court was crowded with professional men and others anxious to hear the prisoner defend himself. Supple was very cool, challenged several of the panel and wisely refrained from cross-examining

any of the witnesses. In his address to the jury he complained of being tried again for what he said was the same offence for which he had been sentenced. He described graphically the terrors of the condemned cell and the punishment he had already undergone and considered it was not fair play if even it were legal to put him again on his trial. He justified the shooting of Smith as there was no other way of dealing with such a crafty slanderer, said every true man woman or child in the colony was equally concerned with him and appealed to the jury to show their detestation of slander and slanderers by returning a verdict of not guilty. Supple's speech was well delivered and very much to the point. The jury were locked up for six hours and then discharged as they could not agree, it seems some wished to reduce the crime to "shooting with intent to do grievous bodily harm" instead of "with intent to murder." A funny idea that a man who fires barrel after barrel at another and afterwards acknowledges that he wanted to kill him, should be considered only inclined to wound and not to destroy. It shows however public opinion to be against hanging Supple and so the government had better wait patiently for the result of the appeal and leave him alone till then.

'Went to the Yorick Club in the afternoon and read for some time. Had a little chat there with Neild.'

George Higinbotham and F. S. Dobson defended Supple free of charge. Kendall remarked in *The Freeman's Journal*, 2 December 1871: 'The sympathy universally felt for him during the time of his trial was, literally, without precedent in its way – the barristers of Melbourne, for instance, rising almost to a man with offers to defend him.'

He was not easy to defend. Kendall records: 'That he never regretted his attempt upon the life of Mr Smith is unquestionable; indeed, so far from doing so, he said that "he considered he had done a good service to society"; and that, if hanged, "he would, by his death, glorify the gallows."'



Late in 1870 Walter Craig, from whom Gordon had leased the stables and livery business in Ballarat, dreamed his horse Nimblefoot won that year's Melbourne Cup, and that its jockey was wearing a black arm-band which he took as a presentiment of his own death. Pacini in the history of the VRC records that the dream came true: 'Nimblefoot's jockey true to the dream, wearing a black arm-band out of respect to Craig who died before the race.' Thomas Lyttleton's painting of Nimblefoot with the jockey wearing a black armband is reproduced in Day's *Gordon of Dingley Dell*.



October 1870 Kendall's former, and future, patron Henry Parkes sought the protection of the insolvency court. His assets were £11,456; his liabilities £35,036.

Kendall and Charlotte returned to Sydney on board the *Macedon* on 24 October 1870. Once he had left Melbourne, Kendall maintained no further connection with the publications there. It was

as if he wanted to cut off the experience of that time completely. He ceased publishing in *The Australasian* after September 1870, and in the *Australian Journal* after December. As for *Touchstone*, it published its last issue on 10 December 1870. The Melbourne *Punch* survived until 1925.

26 November *The Empire* reported: 'PAINFUL CASE OF MENTAL ABERRATION. At the Sydney Water Police Court, Henry Kendall was brought up, charged with having, on the 21st November, at Sydney, feloniously uttered and put off a cheque on the Commercial Bank of Sydney for payment of £1 sterling, purporting to be signed by Thomas Holt, prisoner well knowing the same to be a forgery. Detective-constable Richard Elliott deposed that about 4 o'clock on the 21st inst, he arrested Kendall. He (the officer) was assisted by detective Bowden; before arresting prisoner witness asked him to tell from whom he had received the cheque for £1 which he uttered to Mr Mitchell, chemist; prisoner, in reply, said, "I've uttered no cheque to Mr Mitchell." Prisoner afterwards said that he received it from his brother, three or four days ago, and stated that his brother had gone to Moreton Bay; witness charged the prisoner at the central police-station by virtue of a warrant; witness read the charge, and received no reply; he searched him, and found 2¼ d in coppers, a paper document and two envelopes, one addressed "Sir Terence Aubrey Murray, Parliament House." The other envelope was said to contain pens. In answer to a question put by detective Bowden whether the address on the envelope was the prisoner's handwriting, he said it was. Detective-constable Bowden stated that he had escorted the prisoner from the detective office to the central police-station.

'When he was in Castlereagh Street, he asked if he would be searched at the police-office. Witness said he would. He said he would rather die than suffer the exposure. He put his hand in his pocket, and on taking it out, witness perceived some papers in his hand, which he seized, and after some difficulty got the cheque now produced. It purports to be drawn by Thomas Holt on the Australian Joint Stock Bank for £2, and is dated November 22 1870. He begged of witness to destroy the cheque, or let him tear it up, and then said, "I see it is no good, I am guilty."

'The cheque was produced, and marked B.

'Mr Croft: I did not give him any caution.

'William Henry Mitchell deposed: I am a druggist residing at the corner of Pitt and King Streets. I have known the prisoner between three and four years. About 10 o'clock on the 21st instant prisoner came to my shop, and after shaking hands asked me if I could cash a crossed cheque for £1, as he had no banking account.

'I asked him whose cheque it was, and he said it was drawn by Mr Thomas Holt, of Cook's River. I cashed it, and gave him £1 for it. The cheque produced is the one I cashed. Before giving him the £1 note, I requested him to endorse it in the usual way, which he did, and wrote the endorsement, "H. Kendall" upon it. I sent it with other moneys about an hour afterwards to the bank. About ten o'clock prisoner came to my shop again, and asked me not to send the cheque for collection that day, as he would call next morning and give me £1 for it.

'I told him I had already sent it to the bank, when he said, "Well, it is of no matter, if it is not all right you will receive notice of dishonour;" whereupon I laughed at him, and remarked

something about the idea of Thomas Holt's cheque not being good for £1, and I said I would have cashed it had it been for £10.

'He said then, "However, if it is not all right, I got it from Mr Walker, and I can produce my man."

'I saw the prisoner for the third time on the 2nd inst, and told him I had received notice of dishonour.

'He said, "I will pay the £1 at four o'clock." It was then three o'clock.

'He came into my shop, and we had a conversation about it. I asked him whose cheque it was. He said it was purported to be drawn by Thomas Holt, of Cook's River.

'I then asked him who wrote the cheque, and he said it was written at his place at Ashfield on the 22nd, by a young man named Payten.

'I then said it must be a forgery, to which he made no remark.

'Thomas Holt deposed that he was a member of the Legislative Council. The signature to the cheque produced (exhibit C) is not his. He gave no authority to any person to sign his name to it. The cheque (exhibit B) for £2 does not bear his signature, and he gave no one authority to sign his name to it. Edward Ruthven, a clerk in the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney, stated that he looked at the cheque (exhibit C). It is on the Commercial Bank for £1 dated 21st November, 1870. It was presented at the Commercial Bank, and dishonoured, as no person of that name had an account there. Charles Robert Creed, a junior clerk in the Joint Stock Bank, deposed that he did not know the signature on the cheque (exhibit B). It was not Mr Thomas Holt's. Witness was acquainted with Mr Holt's signature. No other person of that name except Mr Thomas Holt then present had an account in the bank.

'For the defence, Henry Evans was called. Is a sorter in the General Post Office and is brother-in-law of the prisoner Kendall, who has recently returned from Melbourne. He had opportunities of noticing him since his return from Melbourne. He noticed that he has been very strange in his manner, and spoke on more than one instance incoherently. He told witness at one moment that his wife was in Melbourne, and at the next moment that she was in Sydney, although she was in Sydney, having come up with him from Melbourne. He was constantly contradicting himself. One evening, at witness's residence, about three weeks ago, he burst out crying like a child, and said that he was sorry that he had ever left Sydney and sorry for all that had happened. To witness' knowledge nothing had happened to cause him any pain in Melbourne. He occupied a very good position there on the leading journals. He continued crying for five minutes. On one or two occasions he said that he would sooner be out of the world. On some occasions he has not known witness. Only the previous day he did not know who witness was.

'William Henry Tindale, the husband of the prisoner's mother-in-law, deposed that Mr Kendall resided with him at Five Dock. Soon after he arrived from Melbourne he noticed that prisoner was very absent in his mind, and had a vacant stare. He had not known him much previously. He used to wander about the house all through the night during the whole time he was there. For some time he was absent altogether. Witness was looking for him for two nights and two days, and thought it dangerous to leave him. Apprehending danger, a search was made, and he was

subsequently discovered, but he could not say where, and he objected to his reception in his house without a keeper.

‘John Moon deposed: I am a duly qualified medical practitioner. I have examined the prisoner in company with Dr Egan and had a long conversation with him, when he volunteered to furnish me with particulars of his life for the last two or three years. I found him in a highly nervous and excitable state. He spoke much of his sufferings in Melbourne, and of his great affliction in the loss of a child. He has been freely using opiates. I found that his intense thirst for opium had destroyed his nervous system. Instead of procuring sleep it deprived him of the rest he required. His liberal use of spirits destroyed all desire for his ordinary sustenance, so as to render him quite unfit to undergo any mental labour. I consider that at the present time his mind is very shattered, and I am also of opinion that the injury to the mind has been progressing for some considerable period. In addition to my personal examination I have heard the evidence of the other witnesses, and the circumstances mentioned by them strengthen the opinion I had formed from personal examination of him. His bursting into tears without any apparent cause is evidence of extreme nervous depression. In my opinion he is undoubtedly in such a condition as to require very careful medical attendance; in my opinion it would be dangerous to permit him to be at large, as he would be likely to commit an indictable offence. This evidence was corroborated by Dr Miles Egan.

‘The prisoner was committed to take his trial at the Central Criminal Court, and recommended by the bench for medical treatment at the receiving house, Darlinghurst. Mr W. B. Dalley appeared on behalf of the accused, whose case excited the greatest commiseration. There can be no possible doubt in the minds of all who know Mr Kendall that he is labouring under mental disorder, and has been so for some time.’

In an attempt to reduce the numbers of the mentally ill being sent to gaol, the 1868 Lunacy Act had provided for temporary receiving houses. The Darlinghurst receiving house was the first. It was also used to treat alcoholics as a way of reducing the number of them being sent to asylums.



22 December the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported the conclusion of the case: ‘The prisoner was arrested by detective Elliott, to whom he said he had never uttered the cheque to Mitchell. On being confronted with Mitchell he said he had got the cheque from his brother, who had gone to Queensland and he at other times said it had been written at his house by a young man. Another similar forgery was found upon him, and also an envelope addressed to Sir T. A. Murray, in the prisoner’s handwriting. The handwriting of the address was evidently the same in the writing on the cheque uttered to Mitchell. On his way to the police station the prisoner confessed that he was guilty.

‘To the defence several witnesses were called, who deposed to various facts which were indicative of the prisoner’s temporary aberration of intellect. Dr J. S. Paterson, a Doctor of Laws of the Sydney University, and a barrister, deposed to his having met Kendall in the street shortly

before this charge was preferred against him, that Kendall spoke of his literary performances in Melbourne, and said he had written a poem of forty lines in Æolic Greek – that the Æolic dialect was so fragmentary and barren that to compose a poem of forty lines in that dialect would be almost impossible – that he (Mr Paterson) was a Greek scholar, who knew that Kendall's statement was untrue, and that Kendall must have known that he (Mr Paterson) was acquainted with the falsity of his assertion.

'Mr J. S. Moore deposed to the prisoner's having exhibited various symptoms of insanity – that on one occasion he began unbuttoning his clothes as if he were going to undress himself, and on being spoken to said, "A cloud came suddenly between him and the light, and he thought it was time to go to bed" – that on another occasion he spoke with great levity of the melancholy suicide of a Mr A. L. Gordon, and said with a laugh, that "Gordon had tricked them cleverly" – and that he frequently conducted himself in such a way as to lead the witness to believe he was on the verge of insanity. Mrs J. S. Moore gave similar evidence.

'Mr J. J. Harpur deposed to the wildness of the prisoner's manner, his pallor, nervousness, and incoherence of language, and to his having said that he would commit suicide if he could be certain that there was a spirit world into which he would enter after death.

'Mr W. H. Cooper said he had met the prisoner at Punch's Hotel, in King Street, that the prisoner had spoken to him of circumstances which had no existence save in the prisoner's imagination, as if they were matters of fact, and that he displayed extraordinary incoherence of manner.

'Mr W. H. Hicks also said that Kendall had made him a number of statements with regard to his proceedings in Melbourne, which were wholly false, and with reference to which Kendall could have had no object in deceiving him.

'Mr Rutter, Mr Tindale, and Mr Evans, persons who were connected with the prisoner by marriage, swore to a great number of circumstances which tended to show that the prisoner was of unsound mind.

'Mr N. Stenhouse said that Kendall had visited him, that he seemed much depressed, and had said nothing about having composed a poem in Attic Greek, but that he had spoken very feelingly of Gordon's suicide.

'Dr Moon, Dr Egan and Dr Paterson having heard the evidence, gave opinions to the effect that the prisoner was not responsible for his actions at the time when he uttered the cheque which was the subject of the charge preferred against him. All the witnesses said that the prisoner looked very ill and haggard, and that his manner was very eccentric.

'Dr Aaron, who was called on the part of the Crown, said that the prisoner was sane when he was committed to gaol on this charge, but he admitted on being cross-examined, that the evidence tended to indicate the prisoner's insanity. He also said that the prisoner had attempted to commit suicide while in the gaol.

'Mr Dalley addressed the jury for the defence, and Mr Foster replied.

'His Honour summed up, pointing out that general insanity or partial insanity on the part of the prisoner would not be sufficient to acquit him of the offence charged against him. The insanity

must have reference to the offence itself. If the jury found that the prisoner forged the cheque, they must find him guilty unless they came to the conclusion that the prisoner's mind was diseased, so that he did not know that in forging the cheque he was doing wrong, or that he forged the cheque without knowing what he was about. The same rule applied to the uttering of the cheque. It would not do to show that the prisoner was suffering under a general aberration of intellect, unless it were shown that his defect of intellect prevented him from knowing that he was committing forgery, or from knowing that his forgery was a wrongful act. His Honour then recapitulated and commented on the evidence at considerable length.

'The jury retired, and after consulting for fifteen minutes, returned a verdict of not guilty, on the ground of the prisoner's insanity.

'His Honour said the prisoner would have to remain in custody until the pleasure of the Executive was made known.'

Other cases of forgery and false pretences reported along with Kendall's trial resulted in sentences of gaol with hard labour. Kendall escaped that, but his trial was widely reported throughout the Australian press, which was a punishment in itself for someone trying to make a living from that same press.

In 'About Some Men of Letters in Australia' in the *Australian Journal* a year earlier Kendall had described his defence counsel: 'Probably the most brilliant of living Australians, is William Bede Dalley. Nature and fortune are combined in favour of this pet son of theirs. No native of these colonies has achieved more unequivocal success; and certainly none has better deserved it. The subject of this part of my paper is still a young man, but he is already a leading member of the Bar of New South Wales; and within the last ten years, he has been a member of the local Parliament, as well as a Minister of the Crown. The latter office he vacated in a very short time; indeed his literary and social tastes hindered him from following up the promising political career that was opened to him.' A dozen years later Dalley wrote of Kendall in the *Sydney University Review*, December 1882: 'His story of his suffering is not a vain parade of affliction – but a humble confession. He is not sad as night merely from wantonness – but because he is weak and too intensely conscious of his infirmity. It is to invite our compassion and soften our severity, not to inspire a morbid interest in his own misfortunes, that he tells us of his sufferings.' In 1897 a bronze statue of Dalley by James White was erected in the north-east section of Hyde Park in Sydney, opposite St Mary's Cathedral, and a stained glass window and commemorative plaque erected to him in the cathedral, also designed by White.



The Sydney correspondent of the *Tamworth Examiner* sent a dispatch, reprinted in the *Maitland Mercury*, 6 December, giving an overview of the episode: 'The case of Kendall, the poet, has excited profound sympathy here. In truth sympathy is the wrong word to use, compassion is the appropriate one. That his mind has given way under the pressure of domestic afflictions and pecuniary embarrassment, cannot be doubted. There is something pitiable in his woes gone

appearance. He is fearfully pallid and emaciated, while his eyes have a strange, almost a weird, lustre. His dark curly hair gives depth to the pallor of his countenance. During the worst days of his recent aberrations, he produced poetry of a high order, but characterized by one of the worst traits of his olden compositions – monotonous sorrow or an incipient despair. His recent poems, at all events, exhibit intrinsic evidence of a disturbed or morbid imagination. He is confined at the receiving house, Darlinghurst, for medical treatment. It is not likely the Attorney-General will prosecute for the alleged forgery of £1. The *prima facie* evidence clearly discloses the unsound state of his mind. There was no attempt at an imitation of Mr Holt's handwriting, although Kendall was familiar with it; besides one of his recent hallucinations has been that he had been appointed Mr Holt's private secretary, with unlimited authority to draw on that gentleman. The unhappy individual, whose mental condition is thus prominently brought before the public, is fortunate in one respect – his friends are true as steel to him. Messrs Stenhouse, W. B. Dalley, Dr Paterson, Mr Sheridan Moore, and others are unremitting in their efforts to take the sting out of his present affliction, and restore him sound in mind and body (*mens sana in corpore sano*) to those literary avocations at which he formerly gained such high distinction. Australia owes something to her richly endowed son showered with the dangerous gift of genius. It is to be hoped his future will be brighter than his past has been.'

24 December 1870 a son, Frederick Clarence, was born to Henry and Charlotte Kendall at Five Dock, Sydney. Charlotte, aged 20, now left Kendall and moved in with her mother. Kendall later wrote to Holdsworth, 5 March 1876: 'When I have crawled, ill and weak, to her mother's home in order to have a glimpse of her and her child, she has stood and invited her brothers to turn me off the premises.'



23 December 1870 Clarke wrote to Clarson, Massina and Co., the publishers of the *Australian Journal* from Fitzroy: 'I send you a chapter of *His Natural Life*, for the ensuing number of the *Journal*. I am overwhelmed with work, and so unwell that I seriously fear I shall be unable to send you more copy in time to publish this month. If I cannot, you must make shift with what you have, and I will let you have a good supply next month. This is awkward, I admit, and I suppose "some good-natured friend or other" will say I have over-plum-puddinged or hot-whiskied myself, in honour of the so-called festive season, but I can't help it.'

The January 1871 *Australian Journal* announced: 'The numerous literary and other engagements, at this season, devolving upon the author of *His Natural Life*, have restricted the progress of that popular tale to a single chapter for this month.'

It published Clarke's letter along with the single chapter of *His Natural Life*, and a story of Clarke's.

Clarke may have been overwhelmed by work on his pantomime: Goody Two Shoes, and Little Boy Blue; or, Sing a Song of Sixpence! Harlequin Heydiddle-diddle-'em, and the Kingdom of Coins! Fairy Extravaganza opening to Pantomime, Dialogue, and Songs, written by Marcus

Clarke. It opened at the Theatre Royal on 26 December 1870, under the management of Messrs Harwood, Stewart, Hennings and Coppin, and the text was published by Robert Bell, 97 Little Collins Street East. 28 December The Argus reported: '*Goody Two Shoes*, Mr Marcus Clarke's new Christmas extravaganza, was performed for the second time at the Theatre Royal last night to a full house, every portion of the theatre, save the dress-circle, being crowded. The piece went well from beginning to end, and the smart local hits with which it abounds were hugely enjoyed. Some of the allusions in Mr Harwood's chief song, "The style in which it's done," excited roars of laughter. After singing four verses, Mr Harwood was recalled nearly half-a-dozen times, a fresh verse being given on each occasion. The review of the army of shams by Heydiddle-diddle-'em was made a very laughable scene by Mr Greville, who, however, shows a tendency now and then to add a little too much to the text in the shape of "gag." The fern-leaf ballet, if it may be so described, was done even more perfectly than before, and it elicited expressions of praise from the audience. The march of the army of the coins, in which the rank and file are walking sovereigns, shillings, and pence, was also watched with interest, and the performers were deservedly applauded for the precision with which the complicated evolutions were executed. As for the transformation scene, its beauties so delighted the audience that Messrs Hennings and Holmes had to appear twice on the stage whilst it was progressing. During the harlequinade an accident occurred which rather threw a shade over that portion of the performance. While clown and pantaloon were manipulating an explosive leg of mutton it went off in pantaloon's face, scorching him considerably. The victim of the accident, Mr H. Sefton, was unable to continue the performance, and his place for the remainder of the pantomime was taken by Mr Bennett. Mr Sefton, however, is not very seriously injured, and will probably reappear tonight.'

Castieau commented, 28 December: 'There was a very good house but not a crowded one for the third night of the pantomime. This was the first production of Marcus Clarke in the dramatic line and was looked forward to with a great deal of interest. The idea was good, the opening readable but the effect when represented, slow. It was rather too long and there was nothing striking throughout; some puerile local verses sung by Harwood was the only feature that created anything like applause. The Duvallis danced wonderfully, the elder sister represented the girl "with nothing on" and well she did it showing very carefully and determinedly the character she was representing.'



Clarke had indeed had been seriously ill. *The Age* ran a story, reprinted in the Hobart *Mercury*, 7 January 1871 and the South Australian *Register*, 16 January: 'We have often heard of death in the pit, but who has heard of death in hose? Yet that such is the case is too evident. Gentlemen as well as ladies affect colours of the most brilliant hue, and they have to run the risk of absorbing poison into their system if they will gratify their taste. Mr Marcus Clarke has been a victim to a pair of flaming red hose, and having had the curiosity to subject these to the analysis tests, finds that they contained enough poison to kill off three men. Our medical men have often been at fault

in diagnosing some diseases – perhaps the gay coloured clothing of their patients has had something to do with their ailments. Chemists have long enough warned us against the green produced by arsenic, but now they must include other colours in their catalogue. The question now in buying highly collared materials from our drapers will no longer be will it wash? but will it kill? and soon we may expect our community to be dressed in plain colours, and we shall be as quietly appparelled as a community of Quakers.’ The *Mercury* added further, 9 January: ‘It was only on Saturday last that our columns contained an account of poisoning from wearing coloured socks, Mr Marcus Clarke, the well known writer of Melbourne having been confined to his room for a fortnight from the effects of poison introduced into his system by wearing coloured socks. A similar case of poisoning has occurred to Dr Turner, of Richmond, in this colony. That gentleman has been laid up for the last week from the same cause. Not only are the feet of the doctor affected, the skin peeling off them, but the muscles of the legs are cramped and seriously injured. He is now recovering; and it is expected that he will be shortly able to resume his duties.’



26 January 1871 the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported: ‘THE CASE OF HENRY KENDALL.

‘Mr Buchanan asked the Attorney-General, – “1. Is it true that a person named Henry Kendall was tried at the last sittings of the Quarter Sessions at Darlinghurst, on a charge of forgery, and that the jury found him not guilty on the ground of insanity?

“2. Has the said Henry Kendall been imprisoned ever since the trial in Darlinghurst gaol, and is he there now?

“3. If the said Henry Kendall is at present a prisoner in Darlinghurst gaol, is it the intention of the Attorney-General to take immediate steps to rescue the law from the scandal of punishing insanity as a crime, by instantly removing Henry Kendall to some place where he may be properly cared for, and where his malady may be properly treated?”

‘Sir James Martin replied: - “1 and 2. Yes. 3. The case is now under the consideration of his Excellency, and will, I have no doubt, be determined without delay.”’



Castieau, the governor of Melbourne gaol, recorded in his diary, 13 February 1871: ‘There was a man flogged this afternoon. The members of the press and the usual loafers were present in addition to the officials. The prisoner was an old hand with a face that would bring in a verdict of guilty from most juries. He displayed most stolid endurance without the slightest bravado or flashness and took his fifty lashes without a groan and scarcely a movement except a horrible twitching and trembling in the muscles of his arms which he kept strained to the utmost. This was the most severe flogging I have yet seen administered. Marcus Clarke, “The Peripatetic Philosopher” met me in the street this morning and came to the gaol to see the punishment this afternoon. I was glad to see he did not believe much in its efficacy as a rule though he believed

flogging could occasionally be resorted to with advantage. Went into Melbourne in the evening and called at the Yorick.’

Clarke was in the middle of serializing *His Natural Life*. His visit may have been in the interests of research. And may have revived some memories. In *His Natural Life* Kirkland, mercilessly flogged, is described by Clarke as effeminate, a term he uses of himself, and as a bank clerk, his own former occupation. The headmaster at Highgate School, Dr Dyne, was notorious for flogging his pupils. Gerard Manley Hopkins wrote to C. N. Luxmoore, 7 May 1862, about one such occasion: ‘Clarke my co-victim was flogged, struck off the confirmation list and fined £1; I was deprived of my room for ever, sent to bed at half past nine till further orders, and ordered to work *only* in the school room, not even in the library and might not sit on a window sill on the staircase to read.’

Clarke recalled his own experiences of being flogged in *The Australasian*, 24 July 1869: ‘When I was at school I was flogged twice a week, and did not like it. The gentlemanly headmaster – he was cousin to an earl, a D.D., and strictly orthodox – was noted for his use of the birch, and used to smack his lips over a flogging with intense glee. He was a left hander (there was a legend extant to the effect that he had broken his right arm in flogging a boy, but I always doubted it myself), and the way he used to “draw” the birch was astonishing. He used always to stop after ten strokes, if the victim cried out, but as I was under the impression that he flogged me from purely personal motives, and wanted to show my indifference and skey-orn, I would have died rather than whimper ... I was regarded as a small hero by the whole of the fourth form, and when my particular friend picked out the buds with a pen knife that night, and related a complimentary remark made by Bluggins major, head of the “sixth” and a Triton among schoolboy minnows, I felt almost happy.’



Clarke reasserted his commitment to ‘the romance of reality’ that he had admired in Dickens’ novels with an enthusiastic review in the March 1871 *Australian Journal* of Bret Harte’s *The Luck of Roaring Camp*. In the 1870s George Robertson was publishing Australian editions of American writers like Bret Harte and Mark Twain, as well as Mrs Henry Wood, Ouida and Anthony Trollope from Britain.

Clarke wrote: ‘We have always urged upon Australian writers of fiction the importance of delineating the Australian manners which they see around them every day, instead of dishing up the English customs which are current 20,000 miles away. The success with which Mr Bret Harte – a San Franciscan, whose name we never heard until Mr Robertson introduced it to us – has pictured the diggers of California, makes us regret that our advice has not been taken.

‘The notion that, because a thing is common it is unclean, and that the ordinary daily life of our colony contains no poetry and no pathos, is, of all notions, the most foolish. In no condition of human society can poetry and pathos be wanting; for, to eliminate them from a record of human struggles, it would be necessary to annihilate human feeling. But in a new country, where the

breaking down of social barriers, and the uprooting of social prejudices, tend to cultivate that incongruity which is, in reality, the very soul of pathos, there are opportunities for fresh and vigorous delineation of human character which the settled society of the old world does not offer. It is true that there is not in Australia a lettered and leisured class who can afford to pay for purely imaginative literature. It is true, also, that those extremes of vice and virtue, poverty and wealth, which form so large a portion of the novelist's material are happily wanting. But Australia has strange and marked features in her young civilization, which have never yet been touched upon by writers of fiction. Some day, perhaps, some author as unknown as Mr Harte was yesterday, will make use of the material that lies ready to his hand, and produce a work as admirable as Mr Harte's. We hope that day will come soon.'

15 April, a month following his review, *The Australasian* published Clarke's 'Poor Jo', a story very much in Harte's idiom. Turner in the *Melbourne Review* recognizes the context of Clarke's stories: 'Amongst these will be found some sketches that are most essentially and originally Australian. "Grumbler's Gully," "An Up-country Township," and "How the Circus Came to Bullocktown," are as completely illustrative of the daily dreary dullness of a small mining community, or decaying bush hamlet, as are the graphic pictures of Bret Harte when describing the haunts of the Californian miner.' But, Turner stressed in *Once a Month*, 'in no sense, however, can he be said to have copied that entertaining writer, for the humour is essentially and radically Australian, and the characteristics delineated are as racy of our own soil, as the creations of his American prototype are distinctively Californian'.

When Clarke came to publish his first collection two years later, *Holiday Peak and Other Tales*, it consisted entirely of stories set in Australia. He had opened up the territory that Henry Lawson was later to develop.

But the stories have an interest beyond the delineation of Australian manners. Cyril Hopkins quotes the observation of Margaret, the wife of Clarke's friend and collaborator Robert Whitworth: 'He had troubles of which people at the time had no idea. His life is in his short stories. I am astonished to think how dull we were in not seeing it before.'

Unhappy marriage and fulfilment denied are recurrent themes in the stories from 'Keturah' in June 1872 to 'The Romance of Lively Creek' in August 1873.



Castieau records a number of encounters with Clarke in his diary for 1871.

14 February: 'Went into Melbourne in the evening and called at the Yorick. There I met Marcus Clarke and chummed a little with him. We walked home together. Polly and I not so good friends as we should be to-day. Got however a little nearer the mark at bed time.' Polly was Castieau's wife.

29 April: 'Went to the Club and walked with Marcus Clarke so far as our ways went the same.'

1 May: 'Went into town and called at the club, saw Marcus Clarke who had he said been reading my lecture and which if I liked he would publish. I said I should have no objection so he

invited me to dress it up a bit and then give it him. Mr Clarke thought I might add some fresh matter but I declined to do this for fear of the Civil Service regulations, the lecture was published before these regulations came into force and therefore that I could be careless about, but if I wrote anything fresh I might be called to account, as I was, about Dunedin and the prisoners' work at that place. Walked part of the way home with Jardine Smith and Marcus Clarke.'

2 May: 'Went to the Club. While there met Marcus Clarke and came away home. On the road Clarke asked me to dine with him and I accepted his invitation. On the road home we were attracted by some bon bons at a shilling a box. They were the new kind lately introduced, each containing a piece of wearing apparel. Clarke and I both purchased a box. Called in at my house and told Polly I was going home with Clarke. Clarke lives very near the university. Mrs Clarke was Marian Dunn a great favourite with the theatre going public. She has settled down from the favourite actress into the domesticated wife and mother and is apparently very quiet. Clarke and I saw little of her except at dinner and at the end of the evening. I spent a pleasant evening with my host and left about eleven o'clock.'

6 May: 'Went into Melbourne and called at the club where I met Marcus Clarke. He came home with me as he wanted to get a cheque cashed and I offered to do it for him. Harry asked him to write a pantomime and he agreed to do so as soon as Harry determined on the subject. Clarke seems a nice fellow and Polly likes his manner very much indeed.' Harry was Castieau's nine-year-old son.

31 May: 'Marcus Clarke showed me the article that he had inserted in the *Australian Journal* and which was taken from the lecture I delivered at Beechworth some years ago. I was annoyed to find that Mr Clarke had not stated this was the case and that consequently the article appeared as if it was something new and original. This is very awkward because the Penal Commission have just issued their report and it would appear as if I was striving to rival them in the remarks they make upon penal discipline.'



In June 1871 J. G. Knight, the proprietor of the Athenæum, was on the verge of bankruptcy, and the club was closed for ten days, reopening under the ownership of James Hay. Clarke commented in *The Australasian*, 17 June: 'The Athenæum has followed in the bottle-strewed wake of the Victorian and the Union. We can't be a club people. In Sydney they maintain three clubs easily. In the more densely populated capital of Victoria only one important institution survives the tooth of time and the importunity of creditors. Can anyone account for this lack of the social faculty? Is it owing to the charms of our domestic fireside that clubs languish and die? Some clubs perish through a chilly exclusiveness, but that is not a fault which could be truthfully urged against the Athenæum. I shouldn't wonder that the difficulty was not altogether unconnected with the question of rent ... There is no reason why a merchant's club should not exist. All other clubs flourish – cricket, carbine, football, bowling, and even burial clubs display a continuous vitality. They do not break down at a critical moment, and leave a defunct member

unburied as the Athenæum left its melancholy members unfed on Monday last. Up to that point, the catering of King has been beyond caviar, and I am sure everyone who knows his assiduity and ability wishes him better success in his next venture.'

Achilles King, formerly of the Café de Paris, was Knight's managing partner. After the closure King suffered a breakdown and was committed to the Yarra Bend Insane Asylum where he died in January 1873.

The Yorick continued, and 1 July Castieau attended its annual general meeting: 'There was a great deal of talk and comparatively speaking very little business transacted. It was proposed to have a president and vice-president but this proposal met with a great deal of opposition and the motion proposing the officers was negative. I voted against it not because I objected to having a president or vice-president but because I saw there were a large number of the members who did object and I thought the election if it came off would only breed ill-feeling in the club. After this motion was lost there were some others of less interest carried and then came the balloting for the committee. A good deal of interest was taken in this and a good deal of noisy fun while the ballot was progressing. Eventually a very good committee was elected. The Rev. Dr Bleasdale was in a most anxious state for supper and made a few remarks which were not very intelligible nor yet much to the point. He was annoyed at the phrase democracy being used towards the club and said the Yorick should fly high and consider themselves "the aristocracy of talent." The doctor's observations fell flat and we saw little more of him during the evening though he had with much liberality covered the table with colonial wine and for which I regret to say no one who partook of it was grateful enough to express any thanks. We made a great noise but had very little real fun. Did not get home till tolerably late in the morning.'

2 July: 'Felt rather otherwise than bright this morning and had the unhappy consciousness of having taken more wine last night than was good for me. Did not go to church ... bought an *Extraordinary* which was published this morning, the English mail having arrived in the night. There was terrible news of the civil war in Paris, of the murder of the archbishop, two other clergymen, and sixty-four hostages by the insurgents and of the fearful retaliation of the troops, 30,000 of the reds being said to be killed or wounded in the streets. Some of the finest buildings in Paris were wilfully set fire to by the insurgents and women were shot by the infuriated soldiers while they (the women) were like fiends rushing about endeavouring to set light to anything that could be consumed.'



1 July 1871 the *Maitland Mercury* reported: 'Henry Kendall the poet has at last been consigned to a Government Lunatic Asylum. He was brought by some friends before the Police Magistrate at the Central Police Court yesterday, and ordered to be sent in the usual way to one of the Government asylums. The step of bringing him before the magistrate was taken with great reluctance, and in the belief that his cure is more likely to be effected through his being under the

control of an experienced Government officer, peculiarly skilled in lunacy cases, than by leaving him in private hands.’

5 July 1871 Kendall was admitted to Gladesville Hospital for the Insane, receiving treatment for three weeks. Donovan Clarke published the hospital records in ‘New Light on Henry Kendall’ in 1966. The admission sheet, Ref. No. 1209, noted:

‘Form of mental disorder ... melancholia

‘Supposed cause ... trouble of mind

‘Duration of attack ... three months

‘Previous attacks ... one

‘Further history: About four months ago he was in prison on a criminal charge either of forgery or passing worthless cheques. There was no doubt that he was insane at the time he committed the offence and he was therefore acquitted and as the insanity (at the time of his trial) had completely subsided he was set at liberty. His habits are intemperate and he frequently takes opium and sedatives in large quantities ... He is said to have been violent and to have threatened suicide during the present attack ...

‘He is of an extremely nervous temperament and looks worn, thin and ill. He is somewhat melancholic but free from all delusion, quite rational in conversation and correct in behaviour. He is suffering from nervous depression, sleeps very badly and his appetite is capricious.

‘July 12. Remains quite rational and well connected although he feels his position acutely and is most anxious to continue his literary work for the sake of his wife’s support, neither his anxiety or mental depression are greater than they would be natural to a man of his temperament under trying circumstances.

‘July 13. He is writing both for *The Empire* and *Punch* and both his prose and poetic effusions bear all the marks of mental equilibrium.

‘Discharged July 29 1871.’



In 1871 Charles Gavan Duffy, having contemplated taking the Speaker’s chair in the Victorian legislative assembly, withdrew his candidacy after a riding accident. Then in June he was called to form a ministry. 10 July Castieau recorded: ‘In the evening took the youngsters to see the torchlight procession which had been advertised to walk to the Eastern Market as a protestation of the people’s joy at the advent of the Duffy ministry. It was a very poor affair, not above fifty torches altogether and these carried by noisy larrikins who capered about led by a band nearly all drums and followed by a crowd not of the procession but simply in the street to see what was the “davarshun.”’

July 1871 George Gordon McCrae, aged 38, married Augusta Brown, aged 21. Brenda Niall quotes from a letter of George’s father Andrew to Margaret Maine, 25 October 1871: ‘He will now I hope have no more desponding fits but will go on cheerfully and every day be a bright one.’

30 August 1871 Walter Montgomery married the American actress Lallah Burpee Bigelow in London. Two days later he shot himself. 25 September Clarke published an obituary in *The Argus*: ‘He will always be remembered by the public of these colonies as a rare and gifted actor, singularly free from the restraints of stage traditions. He always conveyed to the spectator the impression that whatever he did he did from conviction, and not from a blind obedience to conventional usage. In particular parts – in Hamlet especially – it is not too much to say that his acting was as near perfection as acting can be made to be: and it was always refreshing to witness the spirit and boldness with which he discarded the fetters that so many actors allow to hinder their power of interpreting naturally the characters they essay.’

‘In private, Mr Montgomery was known as an impulsive, warm-hearted, easily excitable man. That he had his faults is but to say that he was human, but his sterling qualities of heart were so many that he will always be best remembered by them. He was an enthusiast in his friendships, and there are scores of persons in this city who will not soon forget the real kindness he has often shown them in their hours of need. His death is a great loss to the stage, for there is little doubt that if he had lived he would have helped a good deal to recover it from the condition of intellectual decay into which it seems to have fallen.’

In Adelaide Tenison Woods and Sister Mary MacKillop were embroiled in conflict with Bishop Sheil and his deputy Charles Horan over the Sisters of St Joseph. Gardiner quotes a report on Bishop Sheil from the following year: ‘Father Horan was his constant guide and companion and, what is worse, he kept the bishop who was like a little boy, in a torpid state, bringing him some brandy mixed with water because of his ill health and stomach weakness. But this made his stomach, as well as his mind, weaker and is thought to have accelerated death.’

Sheil excommunicated Mary MacKillop in September 1871. The following February, close to death, Sheil acknowledged he had been deceived by Horan and others, and lifted the censure on her. But the church hierarchy remained uneasy with Woods and when two years later Mary MacKillop received papal approval for the Order of St Joseph, it was on the condition that Woods was removed as director.



Castieau’s diary offers further of glimpses of Clarke: ‘23 August: After muster went to the Yorick and remained there chatting with Telo, Marcus Clarke, Levey, Wyatt and one or two others. Came home about half past seven with Marcus Clarke.’

7 September: ‘Did not muster but went to the club after five o’clock and came away at six with Marcus Clarke. Walked with him till he purchased so huge a lobster that he was obliged to take a cab to get it home, then went home myself to tea.’

23 September: ‘Attended to gaol duties all the morning and between twelve and one o’clock went to the club. There I met with Marcus Clarke. He has adapted a piece of Molière’s, *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* and called it *Peacock’s Feathers*. It was to be produced this evening and

Marcus was I fancy rather fidgety about it. We chummed together and agreed to take a Turkish bath. I had never had one but Clarke was an old hand and agreed to show me the ropes. We went to the baths in Russell Street. The first thing is to pay your money, this being done you are shown into a narrow passage on each side of which are a number of small rooms. You enter one and strip, fastening around your loins a piece of calico about the size of the figurative fig-leaf. An attendant meets you when you are ready, locks the door of the room you have left and takes away the key. You are then marshalled to the end of the passage and admitted through a door opened for the purpose into a room which is most uncomfortably hot and even oven like. Here you find a number of individuals clad as simply as yourself standing or sitting about the room and in different degrees of perspiration. There is a little fountain in the middle of the room around which are placed glasses for water which is freely imbibed as an inducement to cause a copious sweat. You place your towel on a wooden bench and sit down. Even with the towel next your skin it is uncomfortably warm and it would be almost beyond human endurance to sit on the bench itself unless it was covered with something. Clarke and I stayed in this room till we were supposed to have sweated sufficiently then we went into an inner and still hotter room where we stayed till the attendants, naked sprites, invited us into an inner room where we were made to lie down on benches fixed for the purpose and where we were rubbed and pummelled, soaped and scraped at the discretion of those who for the time being had charge of us. Then we were passed under a shower bath and deluged at first with warm and afterwards with quite cold water. Then we were partially dried, given a small sheet to wrap around our shoulders and a towel to gird around our loins and passed into a comfortable room where there were couches and sofas and where we reposed until we were dried and felt inclined to dress. I hardly know what to say about the success of the bath. I certainly did not feel the exhilaration after it that I have heard is felt and raved about, but then I was not well and could not rightly judge how much jollier I should have been had I taken the bath when in good health. One thing is certain, there is a pleasant feeling of being intensely clean and a lightness in consequence that is agreeable. I shall certainly have one or two more Turkish baths before I shall think of condemning or finding fault with them. While with Clarke today I got talking of Cousins an engineer whom I knew at Beechworth and who is down here very hard up. I said I would lend him a pound. Clarke sent him to me after I got home and Cousins asked for £2 to help pay his landlord. I gave it him telling him at the same time I could ill spare the money ...

‘In the evening I went to the theatre. *Peacock’s Feathers* went very well and was amusing enough though it was made up of very slender materials. It had a decided success and the house was crowded. Clarke was called but did not show. John Dunn who played the principal part in the comedy came before the curtain and thanked the audience on behalf of the adaptor. He said the author had been dead about 150 years so that was very good reason why he could not personally return thanks for the favour with which the piece had been received. I stayed for the burlesque and then got home before eleven o’clock.’

Peacock’s Feathers ran for five performances at the Theatre Royal.



September 1871 the *Australian Journal* announced: 'Mr Marcus Clarke has retired from the management of the *Australian Journal*. That gentleman's other engagements having precluded him from devoting the time and attention requisite to revise and consider, as he would wish, the increasing correspondence with, and contributions to, this periodical, he has deemed fit to relinquish the duties of conductor.'

He carried on serializing *His Natural Life* there, however, for another nine months.

September 1872, a year later, after the partnership of Clarson and Massina was dissolved and Clarson left for Sydney, the *Australian Journal* amplified its comments: 'There is a very prevalent notion that in the conduct of a literary serial, a popular writer must necessarily make the best possible editor, and that a high sounding name is the talisman of success; an error which has before now cost many a proprietor "heaps of gold," yet, nevertheless, the same fallacy continues very generally to pervade public opinion. Whatever may be the cause – and *we* shall not attempt to assign a theory on the subject – the fact is that successful novelists, dramatists, poets or other writers of fiction, or imagination, have uniformly proved decided failures when they have tried their hands at the practical business of editing a journal.'

Things were not going well at home for Clarke or for Castieau. Castieau's wife Polly had been away at Beechworth and, Castieau recorded, 7 September, 'wrote nastily saying she dreaded coming home &c.'

Elliott quotes from Clarke's red leather bound notebook now in the State Library of Victoria, 4 November 1871: 'Marian said she wished she had never married me.'

30 November Castieau wrote in his diary: 'After dinner today, I was lazily lying on the sofa when Marcus Clarke put in an appearance; he had brought Mrs Clarke to see Polly.'

In November Clarke's *Fernande*, an emotional drama in four acts. Expressly adapted from Victorien Sardou's drama of that name for Mrs Mary Gladstone by Marcus Clarke, ran for three performances at the Princess's Opera House in Melbourne.

The last of the 'Old Stories Retold' series had appeared in *The Australasian* in June. Having added a fifteenth Clarke now collected them into volume form as *Old Tales of a Young Country*, published by Mason, Firth & McCutcheon. The introduction to the book is dated 30 November, 1871, in time for the Christmas market.

The Argus reviewed it, 22 December: 'Mr Marcus Clarke, we have always observed, writes well and easily. Despite an unassuming preface, there is far more of the author than of the compiler about the book which is now before us. Like Mr Walter Thornbury and Miss Thackeray, Mr Clarke has a happy knack of investing old stories with a new dress. He has had, during his official connection with the public library, unusually good opportunities of access to such early records of the Australian colonies as are there preserved: and out of these, consisting mostly, as they do, of dim letters, musty pamphlets, tattered fragments of old broad sheets, and other disjointed memoranda of half a century ago, he has succeeded in disinterring a number of rare and curious narratives. The author seems to deal with the slight materials which come into his hands much in the same way as a photographer manipulates a collodionized plate. Out of a mere

film, in which previously little or nothing was visible, he develops the sharp outlines of a vivid and faithful picture ...

‘The period which elapsed between the foundation of the first Australian settlement and the year 1825 may be called the heroic age of colonial history. It seems to have been, like other heroic ages, a season during which several prodigious blackguards enjoyed themselves considerably at the expense of their neighbours. The infant communities in which these worthies flourished being penal establishments, contained, for all historical intents and purposes, only two classes of inhabitants. One was the convict class, and the other the free class, composed, in the early days, almost exclusively of Government officials. It would be hard to say, at this distance of time, which of these two classes produced the greatest ruffian ...’

4 December Clarke wrote to the *Gentleman's Magazine* in England: ‘I send you by this mail a little book called *Old Tales of a Young Country*. My position as secretary to the trustees of the public library of the colony gives me opportunities of discovering such interesting documents as those quoted in the book and I shall be glad, if you wish, to contribute similar small sketches now and then to the *Gentleman's Magazine*. Mr R. H. Horne knows me slightly and can inform you concerning my capabilities etc. – if you wish to know more than the little book tells.’

But the *Gentleman's Magazine* was not responsive. Clarke also sent a copy to the American writer Oliver Wendell Holmes, who replied 19 April 1872.

There was no chapter of *His Natural Life* in the December 1871 issue of the *Australian Journal*. Clarke seems to have been in dispute with the publishers, who stated: ‘The readers of the *Australian Journal* will no doubt be surprised to find no continuation of Mr Marcus Clarke's tale, *His Natural Life*. The proprietors have only to say that, having waited until longer after the usual period for receiving copy from Mr Clarke and delaying the publication, without having received copy or explanation, they felt compelled to substitute the following, from the pen of a well-known colonial writer. In making this explanation to their subscriber, the proprietors feel that nothing has been omitted on their part – especially in reference to pecuniary arrangements – that can at all account for the disappointment above referred to.’



Between August 1870 and August 1871 Clarke had published half a dozen Bullocktown stories in *The Australasian*, but nothing further of his appeared there for the next six months. It may be that having relinquished the editorship of the *Australian Journal* in September, he focused his energies on the serialization of *His Natural Life* and on making some detailed revisions and corrections to ‘Old Stories Retold’ for book publication.

But Clarke's absence from *The Australasian* may also be related to the continued hostilities between him and James Smith, one of the issues that led to Smith's being asked to resign as editor. Clarke was still publishing in *The Argus*, which suggests there was no dispute between him and the management. There was a dispute between the management and Smith, however. Smith, having discovered spiritualism, was espousing his new faith enthusiastically, too

enthusiastically for the management. Lurline Stuart records in her biography of Smith that at a meeting in December 1871 they expressed their concern about ‘the careless and indifferent way in which the editorial duties of *The Australasian* were being performed’. Smith was asked to resign, and did so on 16 January 1872, after two years as editor. He was succeeded at *The Australasian* by Henry Gullett, who served until 1885. After Smith’s departure Clarke’s contributions resumed.

Smith remained committed to spiritualism for the rest of his long life, a commitment that Charles Bright similarly shared. Castieau noted in his diary, 14 January 1872: ‘Bright a professed spiritualist and James Smith another, a little more so, preached at the Unitarian chapel today. Bright on The Creation and Smith on the Religion of Shakespeare. Bright preached in the morning and Smith in the evening. The divine origin of Jesus is totally denied by the spiritualists and all creeds are declared vanities. Good works done help a man both in this world and the one to come. Smith is wonderfully impressed with the new power and states he is among the most favoured of mortals, receiving manifestations from spirits of the highest spheres. He even went so far as to say it is reported that he had a message from God himself. Poor fellow “Yarra Bend” on the brain I very much fear.’ Henry Handel Richardson’s father, Walter Richardson, was also deeply involved in spiritualism at this time, becoming president of the Victorian Association of Progressive Spiritualism and contributing some twenty articles in the course of the decade to the journal *The Harbinger of Light*.

Smith remained employed by *The Argus* until 22 July 1896 when, aged 76, he was asked to retire, once again, Stuart notes, ‘in consequence of his leaning towards spiritualism’. He died 19 March 1910.



Anthony Trollope now announced that he was visiting Australia, where his son Frederick had settled as a squatter. Clarke was one of those less than enthusiastic. Cyril Hopkins recalled a letter from Clarke about *The Claverings*: ‘Referring to a novel of Trollope’s appearing in serial form in the *Cornhill Magazine* at that time ... he exclaims with his usual delightful candour and directness, “Trollope is simply Trollopien. The only fresh character in the story is Sophie Guardeloup. Everyone else is an old friend. I am sick of manly, honest clerks in post-offices and ‘loving, womanly’ but ‘deserted’ parson’s daughters. Cannot A.T. give us an *amour* between a Dean and a dairy-maid, or tell us how the wife of the Bishop of Barchester intrigued with the bell-ringer of the cathedral and the result? His characters never sin but only are going to. His cup of Circe is but lemon kali or toast and water at the best, his wildest revelry a church tea-meeting, his maddest debauch a flirtation with a pew-opener during the voluntary. He is the poet of conventionalism.”’⁶

6 December 1871 Trollope wrote to G. W. Rusden: ‘I was asked to name a day for a dinner at the Yorick Club, and some time since suggested Saturday 16. – But have no answer to that suggestion. Would you kindly let it be known that I shall turn up in due time if I am wanted.’

11 December 1871 Castieau recorded in his diary: 'The dinner the Yorick Club talk of giving for Trollope does not seem to create much enthusiasm among the members of the club and judging from the small number there are who have promised to attend I fear it will be next akin to a failure, unless the arrival of the novelist will "stir men's blood" and make them forget the shillings in the satisfaction of entertaining a man who has created for himself a firm standing in the literary world although he has done too much writing not to have written a good deal that his friends might well wish unwritten.'

The dinner at the Yorick was held on 18 December, and Trollope gave his lecture 'On English Prose Fiction as a Rational Amusement' to an audience of 3000 in the Melbourne Town Hall; Sir Redmond Barry was in the chair and Haddon proposed the vote of thanks, *The Argus* reported the following day. Trollope was given another dinner at the Athenæum in early 1872. Standish recorded in his diary: 'Dined at Athenæum with Dalley who gave us an excellent dinner. Trollope, O'Shanassy, Phelps, Capel, Candler, W. Greig, Ted Lee, young David Cooper, Mr Leicester, Rothwell etc (14 in all). Played pool.'

Rather than at the Yorick, Trollope spent time at the Melbourne Club. McNicoll records: 'he made much use of the club, being proposed for honorary membership by G. W. Rusden four times during his 1871–72 visit, and again in 1875.'

Clarke held forth on Trollope in his *Argus* column, 'The Buncle Correspondence', on 2 February 1872, defending French novels from some moral censure Trollope had delivered, and 13 April characterizing him as Mr Cackleby Twaddle for his observations on Australia.



Kendall was now writing regularly for *The Freeman's Journal*. Established in Sydney in 1850, it was an Irish Roman Catholic weekly modelled on the Dublin publication of the same name. Kendall wrote in 'About Some Men of Letters in Australia': 'Dalley was editor and part proprietor and editor of the Sydney *The Freeman's Journal* in the palmiest days, when, notwithstanding its sectarian character, it had a great influence over the politics of the colony.' Sheridan Moore had edited it in 1856–57, until forced to resign by Archbishop Polding. It was now edited by Thomas Butler. 2 September 1871, Kendall began publishing his series of eleven articles on Irish writers, 'The Harp of Erin'. 2 December he began a further series of eight articles, 'Notes Upon Men and Books,' dealing with Australian, American and British writers. Ackland's biography remarks: 'his views are tinged with sadness as many of his comments bear directly on his own sorry plight as a colonial author. His discussion of individual Irish writers, for instance, provides a complementary portrait gallery to his local depictions of the trials imposed on native talent by a hostile and uncomprehending environment.'

The first of his 'Notes Upon Men and Books' dealt with Gerald Henry Supple. Though Supple was in no way a major writer, the essay had a topicality. Having been found guilty of the murder of Walshe and sentenced to death, Supple had been reprieved on a legal technicality. He was then given a second trial for the attempted murder of G. P. Smith and found guilty. De Serville records

in *Pounds and Pedigrees*: ‘death sentence commuted to life imprisonment; released after Smith’s death and settled in New Zealand where he died, unmarried, in poverty.’

The essay had a personal topicality, too, in relation to the circumstances of Kendall’s own recent life – his trial for forgery and his incarceration in Gladesville hospital.

2 March 1872, in the last essay of the series, ‘Notes Upon Men and Books – 8. Men of Letters in New South Wales and Victoria’, Kendall dealt with Deniehy, Richard Rowe, who had written as Peter Possum, Gordon and Clarke.

He offered a reassessment of his Melbourne associates: ‘With the exception of some capital songs by that fine fellow A. L. Gordon, and half a dozen or so of love lyrics by the same hand, the Victorians have not given us, to our knowledge, a single verse above the commonplace order – as their local magazines, and the shelves of a special department of their Public Library, abundantly prove. With respect to poor Gordon’s verses, they seem to have been merely the result of intense feeling – a feeling helped to expression by a wonderful power over the mechanism of metre and a lively memory – as to the sentiments of poetic models. In other words, it strikes us that, had Swinburne and Browning never written, we should never have had Gordon’s love ballads, or at least their spirit in its present form; and, with regard to his excellent “Lay of the Loamshire Cup,” and the “Ride from the Wreck,” they seem to have been suggested by the robust, sporting lyrics of Whyte-Melville, Lawrence, and Kingsley. Still we are bound to say we believe that, in naked strength, in dash, and in all the requisites that go towards making a perfect song of the sort, Gordon’s productions are far and away beyond his models. Yet he was clearly not a poet in the sense that Harpur was. The latter, in short, had a large share of that rare gift, the creative faculty; whereas Gordon had not a spark of it. This, from an aesthetical point of view, makes, of course, all the difference in the world.

‘Perhaps the young writer who used to contribute to *The Australasian* under the heading of *The Peripatetic Philosopher* is the Victorian most entitled to be pitted against Peter Possum; but the contrast is certainly not favourable to him. Peter paints with a cunning brush; while the Peripatetic Philosopher has to shift with a burnt stick. To be more literal, the former brings to his work a matured intellect weaponed with encyclopædic scholarship; whereas the latter comes by no means possessed with full-grown faculties or with a culture at all comparable to that of his rival. The Victorian is brilliant, certainly, (indeed in mere glitter he surpasses Peter); he has wit, but it is wit of the hard, “Frenchy” kind; his *style* is undoubtedly good – a style, in fact, with “go” in it; but of the great, glad quality of humour so abundantly shewn by Peter he has a singularly small share. This singularity appears in greater prominence when set side by side with the fact that, in pathos he is, at least, the equal of the Sydney man. Still it is not in these Peripatetic Papers that he shows this beautiful property; on the contrary we must go to his novels for it.

‘As a novelist, Mr Marcus Clarke (for that is his real name) stands head and shoulders over all who have attempted storytelling and character-painting in these colonies. In saying this, we do not lose sight of Mr G. A. Walstab’s capital tales *Confessed at Last* and *Double Harness*; but, while Mr Walstab can tell a good story and fill it with brilliant dialogue, he seems to have no power at all to create novel types of warm, breathing, human flesh and blood. Setting *Long Odds*

(that clever but perhaps incongruous effort of a mere boy) aside, let the reader turn to the earlier chapters of *His Natural Life*, now running through the pages of the *Australian Journal*, and examine the portraits of Rufus Dawes, Sarah Purfoy, and Captain Frere. If we are not greatly mistaken, he will very quickly admit the excellent successes of Mr Clarke in a domain where the author of *Double Harness* has never yet been able to set foot. As an instance of another of Mr Clarke's faculties, namely, his remarkable power of describing events with dramatic effect, we will quote part of the race scene from *Long Odds*.'

Kendall then quoted a couple of pages from *Long Odds*, after which he added: 'But it is to the powerful tale, *His Natural Life*, that we must turn, if we wish to see Mr Clarke at his best.' And he quoted a further page from *His Natural Life*.



The same year, 1872, Kendall wrote a more general piece on the condition of authorship for *Punch Staff Papers*, 'Men of Letters in New South Wales': 'While every possible effort has been made by the colony for the attainment of physical prosperity and wealth – almost next to nothing has been done with regard to its intellectual advance; or, in other words, towards the creation and fostering of a native literature.'

After paying tribute to George Barton, Daniel Deniehy and Charles Harpur, he continued: 'I will now proceed to sketch the austere situation occupied till this day by the colonial *literati*. With one or two exceptions, the whole of them are poor; and most of them have no means of livelihood than the pen ... Many – indeed the most of them, enter the field while mere youths, full of enthusiasm, elated with consciousness that in the unique life and scenery around them they can find ample material for the exercise of their respective gifts; but the end invariably is disappointment and sorrow. They very soon come to realize that Australia is a new country; that society here is still in an unsettled, chaotic state; that the large bulk of the population have yet to get their money before they can enjoy leisure; that the wealthy classes – the geebung aristocracy, as they are called – are formed for the most part of illiterate people, who have risen from the ranks; and, in short, that there is not the ghost of a chance for a writer attempting to get his living by offering to the public work not lying within the domains of journalism. So it comes to pass that those who happen to be lucky enough, and who possess the necessary aptitude, join the press, and in due time forget their early aspirations and become plodding, satisfied newspaper hacks. The men who are not so fortunate – God help them!'

He continued with a gloomy survey of publishing possibilities: 'Although attempt after attempt has been made to establish one, we have no literary magazine or other journal of the kind in the colony ... One or two of the metropolitan newspapers have, from time to time, gone out of their way to make room for aesthetical papers and other articles coming within the province of *belles-lettres*. But this has proceeded from sheer courtesy on the part of the proprietors – the literary man being invariably looked upon as the person obliged.'

The *Sydney Morning Herald* reported, 24 September 1873: 'THE PUNCH STAFF PAPERS. We extract the following criticism from the *Spectator*: Here are fourteen authors who have, by their spokesman, Mr Henry Kendall, made a manly protest, in a paper entitled "Men of Letters in New South Wales" against the injustice done to them by the rich settlers who will not patronize them. They say, truly enough, that the majority in a new country are either too busy, or too poor, or too illiterate to care for books, but that there is a cultivated wealthy minority who might help them if they would, and make it so fashionable to purchase their books that the illiterate rich would come to their aid, and buy if they did not read them. It would be taking, perhaps, too refined an objection to this argument to say that no good would come of buying books that were not wanted ... we will accept their position, and only ask them, in simple friendliness and without any ill-natured implication, whether they honestly think they have yet given the wealthy and cultivated portion of their public any sufficient evidence of their intellectual powers. In justice to that supposed unappreciative body, we must say that we do not think the book before us supplies any such evidence, nor do we think the authors thereof have been wise in the means they have taken, to attract attention and profit ...'



Kendall's life between April 1872 and November 1873 is not clearly recorded. 'Written in the Shadow of 1872' he noted on poems he published in the weekly *Town and Country Journal* in 1874 and 1875. His contributions to *The Freeman's Journal* ceased. Nothing of his seems to have appeared anywhere for the next two years apart from his article and six poems in *Punch Staff Papers*, and a song at Garnet Walch's benefit at Sydney's Masonic Hall, reported in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 31 August: 'The song "Honour the Hero," written in memory of the lamented patriot, the late Mr W. C. Wentworth, by Mr Henry Kendall, and set to music by Mr C. S. Packer, was sung in a very excellent manner by Mr Andrew Fairfax. The applause with which the song was greeted was so long continued that Mr Fairfax had to reappear before the curtain. Mr Packer played the pianoforte accompaniments. The music is very appropriate to the words, and the piece will no doubt become a favourite with colonists of this country.'

Ackland's biography quotes a letter Henry Parkes wrote to Henry Halloran about an encounter with Kendall around this time: 'When I lived on Liverpool Road near Lansdowne Bridge, Kendall came tottering to our house one Saturday in a state so wretched that I hardly knew him. He had been lying out the previous night in the bush. He could hardly stand for debility ... We took him in; did the best we could for him. Next day we drove him to Liverpool and engaged a person to board and lodge him, and attend him. When he got well enough, I brought him to Sydney and kept him for a week or two at Miss Horner's Hotel and I got up a small subscription among some friends and reclothed him from head to foot. I really believe he would have perished if these things had not been done for him.'

An anecdote A. G. Stephens recorded in his *Bulletin* diary, 20 May 1896, may also relate to this time: 'Holdsworth frequently used to pay Kendall's fines at Water Police Court. Once,

Kendall went missing – Holdsworth left cashier’s desk – went up to Central Police Court – asked if Kendall there: “No, sir.” Just then heard Kendall’s voice from a cell – “My name’s Rickeybockey” (from *The Caxtons*).’

5 March 1876 Kendall wrote to Holdsworth about that period: ‘I was almost dead in the bitter hospitals of Sydney’ and he told J. Sheridan Moore, 17 May 1876: ‘I recollect very little of my subsequent Sydney life for my mind was unhinged nearly all the time.’



Clarke, Walstab and others, increasingly discontented with the changing nature of the Yorick Club, withdrew from it. Together with other dissatisfied members they reconstituted themselves as ‘The Cave of Adullam’, taking the name from the first book of *Samuel*, 22, 1–2: ‘David therefore departed thence, and escaped to the cave, Adullam ... And every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented gathered themselves unto him.’

Mackinnon writes: ‘The particular cave alluded to was a club house, situated in Flinders lane, behind the *Argus* office, where stands now some soft-goods palatial structure. To this only a very select body of members was admitted, the selectness in this case necessitating that a member should be happily impecunious, and, if possible, be hunted by the myrmidons of the law. From this brief description it will be seen that the Adullamites were a family, *sui generis*. The entrance to the modest building was not easy of access, being only reached by a tortuous lane of ominous appearance, guarded by an animal who boasted the bluest of blue bulldog blood. The pass words were – “Honour! No Frills!” The members were mostly composed of literary Bohemians, whose worldly paths were not strewn with roses, and between whom and the trader there existed a mutual disrespect.’

George Gordon McCrae recalls in “‘The Golden Age’”: ‘We moved in, “the Elf” [Marcus Clarke] leading as before, and unanimously elected Birnie Perpetual President with autocratic powers. There were no laws and none of those mean little things called by-laws ... Officers were appointed on the spot, their several titles and duties prescribed, and themselves each solemnly sworn-in, using a very high-sounding and flesh-creeping oath supposed of the Elizabethan period but as likely as not an imitation cunningly worded and hot from the Jovian brain of the Elf ... I take the liberty of indicating myself as Comrade Splash, a name conferred upon me by the Elf as indicating the artist whose duty it had become to decorate the walls of the Cave with frescoes symbolic and otherwise.’

Neither Mackinnon nor McCrae is specific about the date that the Cave of Adullam existed. McCrae says it ‘lasted but a few months’. But it provided a focus for the coterie that Clarke gathered around himself. Elliott cites Maurice Brodzky’s list of Clarke’s circle at the time that Brodzky knew him, though this may be referring to a somewhat later period. It includes Richard Birnie, Alfred Telo, Henry Keiley, Captain Humphreys, Garnet Walch, Arthur Patchett Martin,

the Topp brothers, R. P. Raymond, George Walstab, J. J. Shillinglaw, the politicians Jerry Dwyer and F. C. Mason and Theodore Fink, the financier and chairman of the *Herald and Weekly Times*.



Richard Birnie, born 1808, son of the Chief Magistrate at London's Bow Street, had practised law in London until 1853, when he was appointed Advocate-General in Western Australia, and became Chief Justice of that colony for a year. He came to Melbourne around 1859, failed as a barrister and was rescued from poverty by James Smith who had him appointed on the staff of *The Australasian* as essay writer.

The essays proved popular, and Birnie published a selection, *Essays: Social, Moral and Political*, in 1879. Birnie himself was an acquired taste. Frank Myers in *The Bulletin*, 7 January 1904, quoted a member as saying: 'I understand the Yorick Club was formed to keep Birnie out.'

Birnie is the subject of an anecdote about Clarke at the Café de Paris that Turner tells in Turner and Sutherland: 'In one sense Clarke certainly did not value money, and nothing but the absolute inability to raise it could restrain him from a liberal expenditure, in which he was always ready to share his windfall with any less fortunate brother of the craft. If he chanced to have the cash in his pocket – not by any means the normal condition – he would promptly respond to any plaintive application, without inquiring too closely whether the cause was a good or a bad one. On one occasion, when about to take his modest evening meal at the old café then kept by Spiers and Pond, he was accosted by a well-known old barrister, whose life alternated between the Benevolent Asylum and the streets, a man of singularly brilliant intellect, and "nobody's enemy but his own." He told Clarke that he had left the Asylum, and had been without food all day.

"Well," said Clarke, "I am just going to have a chop and a glass of ale, and as my homage to learning, allow me to offer you the same."

'But when the old gentleman got the menu, he did not care for a chop. He would take a little soup, a cutlet with the proper appurtenances to follow, some sweets, and cheese and salad. He could not drink beer, a small bottle of claret was necessary, and surely his entertainer would stand a cigar.

'Clarke, whose intentions had been bounded by a modest half-crown, saw his last sovereign rapidly melting away, but fortunately he had just enough money to pay the bill, and he left his guest regally enjoying his smoke. As he went out another member of the press club came in, and seeing the old gentleman sitting in such unwonted state said, "Well, old boy, what is it makes you look so glum amidst all these gorgeous surroundings?"

"Glum," replied the other, "I feel absolutely wretched! Fancy me, a Master of Arts of Trinity College, Cambridge, a Bencher of the Inner Temple, and with a world-wide literary reputation, indebted for my dinner to that little cad who has just gone out!"

Perhaps it was a joke. In *The Bulletin*, 18 August 1904, A. G. Stephens quoted an anecdote from Maurice Brodsky who for six years shared lodgings with Birnie: 'Clarke sought Birnie's company two or three times a week. Birnie used to say "I dined with Marcus last night. The imp

loves to suck my brains.” On such occasions Clarke would have Birnie all to himself from six till ten in the evening, either at the Albion Hotel or Aaron’s. The evening would be concluded by a visit to Bushman’s or Anderson’s Argus hotel.’

The Bulletin, 1 September 1904, published a recollection signed Old Adullamite: ‘Birnie used to say that Marcus’s eyes reminded him of the basilisk, and that their influence was dangerous. He always spoke of him as the Elf.’

Clarke portrayed the sixty-year-old Birnie as Erasmus Rumbelow in *Twixt Shadow and Shine*: ‘A true philosopher, he took the world as it came, slept in the shadow and basked in the shine.

“I am the leader of the bar,” he was accustomed to say. “My father had the confidence of his sovereign, I can lecture like Coleridge, I can write like Addison, and I haven’t sixpence to pay for my dinner.”

‘One hard winter Mr Rumbelow sought, philosophically, the attic retirement of a public institution. When spring came round, and he emerged, his friends were inclined to ignore the period of hibernation. Not so Mr Rumbelow.

“I have left my palace!” said he. “I am now a member of three universities, sir! I sign myself Erasmus Rumbelow, of Oxford, Cambridge and the Benevolent Asylum!”’



1 January 1872 Clarke resigned from the Yorick Club, though his subscription had been paid until 31 May according to the register of members 1868–75. McLaren notes that Clarke applied for membership again on 2 June 1873, proposed by James Duerdin and seconded by Alfred Wyatt, but paid neither entrance fee nor subscription. He seems also to have left the Athenæum, his name not on the 1872 list of members.

Despite his resignation, Clarke was still to be encountered at the Yorick. 3 February 1872 Castieau recorded in his diary: ‘Went to the Club in the afternoon, saw Marcus Clarke, he is not the editor of the *Australian Journal* now. I thought he was and wondered he had allowed the article about the gaol to appear.’

22 March: ‘Marcus Clarke sent Cousins up this afternoon to see if I would cash a cheque for him for £10. The cheque was not to be presented till Monday the 25th. I sent Clarke the money.’ 30 March Castieau recorded the consequences: ‘A letter of a rather unpleasant character reached me also from the bank in which I was informed that a cheque of Marcus Clarke’s which I had paid into my credit had been dishonoured. I sent to the library and found Marcus. He expressed his regret and gave me the cash which I confess I was very glad indeed to get.’

Finances may have been on Clarke’s mind when he wrote a letter to *The Australasian*, 4 April 1872, about the lack of copyright protection for authors. His adaptation for the theatre of Charles Reade’s novel *Foul Play* had been subject to a ‘petty piece of pilfering’ by one of the actors in the 1868 Melbourne version, H. H. Davis, and run for six performances at the Victorian Theatre in Sydney by George Darrell: ‘I sent instructions through a solicitor to see the lessee of the theatre in which my drama was played and was advised in reply not to continue the action, as the “law of

copyright is so uncertain.” Surely, sir, this uncertainty should be removed. Why should not copyright be at least intercolonial, instead of purely Victorian? Why should my drama be played in New Zealand and New South Wales (as it has been played repeatedly) without my being paid or being able to recover payment? It may be urged with equal force – why should I be able to dramatize Mr Reade’s novel *Foul Play* without paying him for the privilege? To which I reply – I am willing that the copyright law be altered, for Mr Sefton Parry dramatized my novel *Long Odds*, and played it for nearly a month in London, without paying me for it. As Mr Stephen Hartpool remarks (in a play called *Hard Times*, dramatized from Dickens’s novel of that name without his permission), “It’s a muddle!”“ *Foul Play* was performed again without Clarke’s permission in Brisbane, Clarke complained in a letter to *The Brisbane Courier*, 28 July 1876.

8 May 1872 Castieau recorded: ‘Busy in the office during the morning. In the afternoon mustered and then went to the club. Walked home with Dr Moloney. In the evening went again to the club, found no one there but Marcus Clarke and Shillinglaw. Had a chat with them. Marcus read a portion of a comic opera he was writing to be called *The Jolly Beggars*. It was very funny but I should think better adapted for the pages of *Punch* than for the stage. Shillinglaw was bemoaning his hard fate at not being able to get any number of fellows to rush in with their £25 and enable him to start off to Queensland and take up a mile of country which he says Mr Ulrich the geologist pronounces to be rich in tin.’

Later that evening, Castieau records, ‘went upstairs to the café of the Theatre Royal (that used to be). Oh it was so melancholy looking, the gasoliers with the exception of one over the bar were not lighted and the room was consequently almost in darkness. Coppin and two friends were sitting at a table and this was all the company in a room that used to be one of the most frequented in Melbourne.’ Eric Irvin notes in his *Dictionary of the Australian Theatre* that the Theatre Royal had burned down earlier in the year, 20 February. Plans to rebuild it were announced in May, and the foundation stone was laid in June.

22 May 1872 Castieau records: ‘Went to the Club. There I read the *Herald* until it was time to go home to tea. In the evening came into town again and on the road met Marcus Clarke who asked me to walk towards the House with him. There was a great debate going on and a want of confidence motion on the grounds that the patronage of the ministry had been unfairly distributed. Some bitter things had been said of Duffy and as he was to reply tonight there were great expectations of something spicy and consequently a run upon the speakers gallery. I walked as far as the house with Clarke, but found it was no use trying to get in and so left him to take his place in the reporters’ gallery where his press connection gives him the entrée.’



Having become premier of Victoria in June 1871, a year later Duffy was voted out of office. Henry Gyles Turner’s *History of the Colony of Victoria* records the circumstances: ‘Charges of abuse of patronage, and a tendency to regard nationality and religion as the test of fitness, began to hurtle in the air, and finally, on the question of the propriety of the appointment of Mr Cashel

Hoey as Secretary of the Agent-General's office in London, the vote was distinctly adverse and the Ministry resigned. Mr Duffy, remembering the enthusiasm his speeches had evoked in the country, believed that he owed his defeat to an unworthy cabal of office-seekers, whose verdict the electors would promptly set aside. He endeavoured to convince the Governor that he was entitled by all constitutional precedent to a dissolution. But Lord Canterbury declined to accept his interpretation, and refused to grant an appeal to the people. The refusal stung Mr Duffy into subsequently describing Her Majesty's representative as "an impoverished peer whose business in the Colonies was to increase his balance at the bankers'," which is a pleasing variation on the charge he so frequently made, that it was the great fortunes of the colony which were united in efforts to thwart him. A few months later the "impoverished peer" was the medium of conveying to Mr Duffy the honour of knighthood, a compliment with which his countrymen generally were pleased.'

John Cashel Hoey was a close associate of Duffy's on *The Nation*, the Irish nationalist journal Duffy founded in 1842. He 'had been part owner and associate-editor of the paper since its revival in 1849' Cyril Pearl records, and when the Agent-General needed a secretary 'Duffy, perhaps indiscreetly but not improperly, recommended his friend Cashel Hoey for the job. Hoey, who had edited *The Nation* after Duffy's departure, was then a member of the English bar. The Opposition attacked the appointment ... The Government was defeated on a no-confidence motion by five votes, and Hoey was sacked.' Hoey's wife Frances was to have a significant role in the English publication of Clarke's new novel. A cousin of George Bernard Shaw, she was a novelist and *Spectator* reviewer, and wrote a weekly column for *The Australasian*, 'A Lady's Letter', from 1873 to 1905.

In his memoirs, *My Life in Two Hemispheres*, Duffy recalls his friendship with Clarke: 'Marcus Clarke spoke to me more than once of a story entitled *His Natural Life* which he was publishing in a Melbourne periodical. He invited me to look at it, which I promised to do whenever I had leisure, and finally, as it was drawing to a close, he sent me the portion published:

'My Dear Sir, – I take the liberty of sending some numbers of the *Australian Journal* containing all that is yet published of my new novel, *His Natural Life*. *His Natural Life* is an attempt to expose the infamies that attended the old transportation system, and the episodes are merely dramatized versions of the facts. I have taken much trouble to collect materials for the story, and to read up and collate the almost-forgotten records of early colonial prisons, &c. I want to show that in many instances the *law* makes the criminal.

'I should be very grateful for a criticism from you on the story – if you can find time to look over it – as I hope to publish it in England as soon as it is completed in monthly numbers. – I am, my dear sir, very faithfully yours,

Marcus Clarke.

'I examined the story carefully and answered his inquiries with the frankness due to a man of judgment and discretion. The narrative was, in my opinion, a singularly powerful and original one, marred by serious faults. For example, it was intensely painful – a sentiment which would become tragic if it concerned persons whom we respected; but whom did he intend us to respect?

The hero was an unhappy creature, suffering innocently a life-long martyrdom, without any adequate or almost any intelligible motive. Unless the motive justified such a sacrifice, the reader would not sympathize with him, and the story would necessarily want interest – a fatal want. The narrative was long and it was unduly protracted, as it seemed to me, by introducing the Ballarat riots under a leader caricatured as Peter Brawler; all this in my judgment ought to be mercilessly expunged. And the song in French *argot*, with a translation into English slang, would be taken for his own if it was not specifically disowned; but it could not possibly be his own, as I had read it in *Blackwood's Magazine* before he was born. The translation was probably by Dr Maginn. The novelist had precipitated a douche-bath of criticism on his head, but he bore it manfully. In his reply he took the objections in good part, and set to work forthwith to amend the original plot.'



The serialization of *His Natural Life* was completed in June 1872. The printer and publisher of the *Australian Journal*, A. H. Massina, recalled: 'A funny thing happened when Clarke brought in the last of his copy of *His Natural Life*.

'He said, "There's the end of it," and I said, "Thank God!"

'Clarke said, "Why?" and I said "I don't want to hear the name of the blessed thing any more!"

"Will you give the story to me?" said Clarke.

'I did there and then.

'He went right away and got £25 for it to start with from George Robertson. I could have made a lot of money out of it, but at the moment was glad to get rid of it.'

Nonetheless, the *Journal* ran the serial again after Clarke's death, in 1881–83, 1886–88 and 1913–15. Henry Lawson recalled in his autobiography: 'We read *For the Term of His Natural Life* (as Marcus Clarke wrote it) in the *Australian Journal*. The introduction was, I think, equal to Dickens' style. The sight of the book with its mutilated chapters and melodramatic "prologue" exasperates me even now.'

In *My Life in Two Hemispheres*, Duffy quotes Clarke's letter of response to his suggested cuts, 22 July 1872:

'My Dear Sir,

'I have to thank you very much for your kindly criticism. Such observations as those which you have made are exactly what I wanted. I confess that I feel a pang at your suggestions for vigorous cutting, but I am sure you are right. I will act upon your advice, and cut off the beginning and end of the book. As thus:

'Open on board the convict ship. Make Dawes a noble fellow who has sacrificed himself to spare a woman whom he loves and whose *lover* has committed the offence for which Dawes is condemned. (North might be this lover and thus heighten the effect of the story.) When North thinks of taking away Dora, Dawes says, "I am the man who is suffering for your sin," &c. North remains in the prison and Dawes escapes. In the meantime Rex, having claimed and enjoyed the money, is discovered. Dawes's conscience and identity simultaneously disclosed. The wreck;

Dawes saves child Dora who dies, Maurice is murdered by prisoners, Dawes is saved, and departs like Monte Cristo. Thus the Ballarat Riots and that idiot Dorcas, who was worse to me than Mercutio was reported to have been to the divine William, excluded, and the compactness of the novel preserved. The great difficulty, however, is the motive. What motive would induce a *young* man to suffer himself to be transported for the life of another?

‘You speak with praise of *Long Odds* and “King Billy’s Breeches.” King Billy is so-so, but *Long Odds* appears to me now to be the greatest *trash*. Many thanks again for the trouble you have taken. When I have altered the book according to your suggestions I think it will be readable. I shall then ask your permission to dedicate it to the Hon. C. Gavan Duffy, as the only way in which I can express my thanks. Very faithfully yours,

Marcus Clarke.’

‘But he had not yet done his best,’ Duffy writes; ‘on further consideration he adopted the present plot, in which the protection of his mother’s honour furnished a high and adequate motive for the tragedy of his hero’s life and death.’

Duffy gave permission for the dedication. By the time it appeared in print, it was to Sir Charles Gavan Duffy, Duffy having received his knighthood.

In ‘J. J. Shillinglaw’s Annotations to *His Natural Life*,’ Lurline Stuart notes that Shillinglaw claimed credit for the ‘high and adequate motive’ now introduced into the plot, writing 3 May 1874 in his presentation copy of *His Natural Life* in the State Library of Victoria: ‘In a book which has been tinkered at by so many hands male and female – including the man to whom it is dedicated – it is hard to say what new turns of thought have been suggested to the author since this novel appeared first in the *Australian Journal*. But I claim to have suggested that at least no *man* would make such a sacrifice as did Dawes except to save say *the reputation of a mother* and M.C. instantly saw it. Compare original. N.B. But the skill of construction is all his own.’

The new plot device has often been criticized as unrealistic. But it had a contemporary resonance in the Tichborne case. The protection of a lady’s name was the mark of a gentleman. Castro, the Tichborne claimant, had declared: ‘My cousin gave me to understand she was *enceinte* and pressed me very hard to marry her before I left. I did not believe such was the case.’ De Serville notes in *Pounds and Pedigrees*: ‘A later Lord Chancellor believed that in traducing the name of a lady, Castro had dished his chances irretrievably.’

James Moloney, the solicitor brother of Clarke’s friend Dr Patrick Moloney, claimed in a letter to J. G. Riley now in the Barr Smith library, University of Adelaide, that he was the means of killing off Rufus Dawes. Randolph Bedford tells the anecdote in *The Bulletin*, 3 August 1911 and later in *Naught to Thirty-Three*: ‘When Dr Pat had his surgery in Lonsdale street, opposite Melbourne hospital, Marcus Clarke then writing *His Natural Life* was a daily, or rather a nightly visitor – for they lived all day and talked all night. Lawyer Jim Moloney had been arguing against a happy ending and therefore an inartistic ending to the tragedy of Rufus Dawes: and failing to move Marcus he led him out for a while at midnight.

“‘It was a magic night,’ says Jim Moloney; ‘the moon was in her pride; and we walked up Russell Street past the gaol and down Grattan Street and along the Sydney road – the trees so still, the night so fair.

‘And I said to him: ‘Marcus, Rufus Dawes must die.’

“‘I can’t, Jim,” he said. “I can’t kill the poor chap.”

‘I said “Marcus, he must die! Consider! For years you have held him bound in torture – beaten, disgraced, unmanned. The iron is in his soul; Nature has borne all she can, and now craves only the quiet of the grave. Kill him. Kill the poor weary man. Marcus, screw your courage up and kill him.”

“‘Oh, Jim,” he said, “let him have a day or two of happiness. His innocence is known – his mother wants him in England. Let him live.”

“‘No, he must die. You offer him a new torture. You offer that poor stricken unhappy sinful soul – his mother – a new unhappiness, the knowledge that he knows. The chain gang and the shadow of the gallows have been over him, and, innocent though he is, he can never escape their memories. Indurated to insult, his soul scarred by injustice as his physical body by the lash – you may take him back to England, but Norfolk Island and its memories will go with him.”

“‘But he is still human,” pleaded Marcus, but more weakly. “Let him live.”

“‘No; use the humanity left him to do some great deed, but he must die.”

“‘Yes, I could do that,” said Marcus. “Make him save Sylvia from elopement with North, and give his life for her in the end.”

“‘Do as you please with him; but, Marcus, he must die. Come. No weakness.”

‘Well, it was nearly dawn when we returned to my brother’s surgery, and I said to him: “Pat! Marcus and I have killed Rufus Dawes.”

“‘I’m very glad to hear it,” said Pat. “Let’s have a drink.”

‘And the three murderers sat down to beer.’



April 1872 Marcus’s cousin Andrew Clarke was created a Knight Commander of the Order of St Michael and St George. Vetch quotes a letter from Andrew’s colleague at the Admiralty, Sir Sydney Dacres: ‘Well, my dear friend, I am glad this shabby government have at last shown sufficient appreciation of your strong claims on the country as to pay you the first instalment of their long debt to you.’ In May Sir Andrew was appointed Governor of the Straits Settlements, arriving in Singapore in November. Marcus told Cyril Hopkins: ‘He has asked me to visit him.’ But no visit ever took place.

Clarke wrote a couple of sketches for Carrie and Harry Rickards of the London Star Comique Combination, *Strolling on the Sands*, performed at St George’s Hall in February, and *Perfection* performed in March 1872. Henry Benjamin wrote the music. Katherine Brisbane’s *Entertaining Australia* records that Rickards had come to Australia in December 1871 after having gone bankrupt in England. He was successful and toured Australia again a couple of times in the

1880s, finally settling in Sydney and becoming the father of Australian vaudeville with his Tivoli theatres.

Although his wife had retired from the stage, Clarke was still involved with the theatre. Back in 1868 he had written *The Abbé's Plot* for Charles Vincent, but it was not produced. This may have been an earlier version of the play that now appeared as *Plot!*, dramatized from Alexandre Dumas' novel *Le Vicomte de Bragelonne* (1848). *The Argus* gave it a substantial review, 13 August: 'A new dramatic season, under the direction of Messrs Henry Holmes and Stuart O'Brien, was entered upon at the Princess' Theatre last evening ... Mr Clarke cannot be congratulated upon having added a lasting work to the dramatic literature of his country, but *Plot!* is, nevertheless, a decidedly taking piece, and when the defects inseparable from a first representation have been got over, it will, no doubt, be received with increased favour by the public ... At the close of the representation there were loud calls both for Mr O'Brien and the author. The last-named gentleman was, after some difficulty, prevailed upon to bow his acknowledgements. Mr O'Brien, in thanking the audience on behalf of Mr Holmes and himself for their liberal patronage, said it was the intention of the lessees, in choosing dramatic compositions, to give the preference to colonial authors. Judging from the applause which followed, there must have been a good many in the pit with unaccepted plays on hand.'

Plot! ran for eleven performances, and in November a revival of *Foul Play* ran for five performances at the Prince of Wales Opera House. 5 November *The Argus* reported a testimonial night at the Princess' Theatre, with 'a cleverly composed address from the pen of Mr Marcus Clarke, spoken by Mr Jno. Edwards, who paid his audience the compliment of committing it thoroughly to memory. Many of the points were quickly seized by the audience ...'

Meanwhile at the Yorick club Castieau recorded his impressions of Clarke's friend Walstab, in his diary 5 July 1872: 'He is generally in opposition and is not to be smoothed down by the submission of the opponents for as soon as they concur with his views, he takes another sight of the case and proceeds on another tack which quite knocks on the head even the arguments five minutes previously obtrusively urged by himself.'

30 July Castieau recorded meeting another Yorick member, the Chief Commissioner of Police: 'Went to a meeting called for the purpose of establishing a Society for the Aid of Discharged prisoners. When I went into the room I saw the Dean, a number of clergymen of different denominations and Captain Standish. The Captain hailed me with apparent thankfulness. He said until I came he felt as if he were the only sinner in the crowd and that he was entirely out of his element.'

21 August 1872 Castieau was involved at the Yorick in an episode involving his position as prison governor: 'Went to the club. Felt my position unpleasantly while there, for I was called out of the room and told I was wanted in the strangers' room. I went and found Walstab the novelist in charge of a constable who had arrested him for non-payment of his wife's maintenance. Walstab asked me to tell the *Telegraph* people of his trouble and I did so, then hastened home so that I might be in time to receive the prisoner when he arrived at the gaol. Left the club with McKinley and on the way home met Mr Panton the police magistrate at Geelong and who was

formerly visiting justice at this gaol. Walstab was soon in my custody and I sent him to the cell directing particularly that he should be supplied with clean bedding. I thought it better to do no more than that for him.'

The Brisbane Courier reported, 23 September 1872: 'Basil E. Kendall was committed for trial at the Toowoomba Police Court on Tuesday last, on a charge of forging and attempting to utter an order for the payment of £3 14s. 6d., purporting to be signed by Mr Thomas Hanmer. Prisoner, who had been employed at Talgai some eighteen months ago, was given into custody in trying to pass the forged order on Mr Bird, of the Post Office Hotel.'



14 September 1872 *The Australasian* published Clarke's story 'Human Repetends'. Robert Whitworth recalled in his preface to *The Mystery of Major Molineux and Human Repetends*: 'It attracted much attention, as much for the forcible style in which it was written as for the daring and speculative ideality with which it was invested.'

Mackinnon quoted from it as if Clarke were offering an autobiographical retrospective on his life: 'The only son of a rich widower, who lived but for the gratification of a literary and political ambition, I was thrown when still a boy into the society of men thrice my age, and was tolerated as a clever impertinent in all those witty and wicked circles in which virtuous women are conspicuous by their absence. My father lived indifferently in Paris or London, and, patronized by the dandies, artists, and scribblers who form, in both cities, the male world of fashionable idleness, I was suffered at sixteen to ape the vices of sixty. Indeed, so long as I was reported to be moving only in that set to which my father chose to ally himself, he never cared to inquire how I spent the extravagant allowance which his indifference rather than his generosity permitted me to waste. You can guess the result of such a training. The admirer of men whose success in love and play were the theme of common talk – for six months; the worshipper of artists whose genius was to revolutionize Europe – only they died of late hours and tobacco; the pet of women whose daring beauty made their names famous – for three years; I discovered at twenty years of age that the pleasurable path I had trodden so gaily led to a hospital or a debtors' prison, that love meant money, friendship an endorsement on a bill, and that the rigid exercise of a profound and calculating selfishness alone rendered tolerable a life at once so deceitful and so barren.'

When his father dies suddenly, the narrator finds his expected inheritance has evaporated, and he is shipped off to Australia: 'To walk down Collins Street was like pulling up the Styx. On either side I saw men who had vanished from the Upper World sooner than I.'

He meets some of his earlier acquaintances: 'Hopkins had another wife in addition to the one whom he left at Florence ...'

There is also a Tomkins, a Jenkins and a Wilkins, so perhaps Hopkins was just another generic name, not a reference to either of his boyhood friends. Though Cyril was about to marry. Gerard wrote to A. W. Garrett, 22 March 1872: 'I am studying at Stonyhurst and so shall be, I think, for a year and a half more. Then I suppose I shall be set to teach for some years, after that sent to my

theology for three or four years and meanwhile ordained. I went to see my people for a week last autumn and found things pleasanter than they have ever been since my conversion, which is a great comfort. My next two brothers are engaged to two sisters, very charming girls, it seems: the elder is to be married this year.'

8 October 1872 Cyril Hopkins married Harriet Bockett, the daughter of Daniel Bockett of Heath House, Hampstead, the suburb where the Hopkins family lived. Cyril's brother, Arthur, married Harriet's sister Isabella. Gerard noted in his journal that he wrote to Cyril on his wedding day, mailing him the orange and yellow feathers from a gold-crested wren which had got into his room three days earlier.

8 December 1872 Benjamin Francis Kane, best man at the Clarkes' wedding, died of acute hepatitis. He was thirty-eight.

¶

19 December 1872 Castieau attended the trial of two of the *Carl* blackbirders, Harry Mount, who was Gordon's former partner in the Ballarat stables, and Morris. They were charged with murder in the course of an expedition to the Solomon Islands to kidnap labour for the Fiji copra plantations. Dr James Patrick Murray, who knew Gordon in Brighton and performed the post-mortem on his body, was the leader of the expedition. Murray, having turned Queen's evidence, could not be tried. The case was a famous one, and Clarke noted it in his *History*. The revelations helped to bring in regulation of the labour recruiting trade.

Tom Harrisson writes of Murray in *Savage Civilisation*: 'He was the owner of the *Carl*. He had turned Queen's evidence in 1872 and disclosed the fearful atrocities aboard his ship. He told how pig-iron was thrown into the canoes, the natives knocked on the head, picked out and then stowed below. Eighty were collected like this. But they started a disturbance in the hold, which was quieted by the watchman firing a pistol. Next night it broke out again; the men were nearly suffocating; and efforts to quiet them failed. They appeared to be breaking down the bunks and arming themselves with this wood; they began to use it as spears to attack the hatchway. The crew fired into the hold most of the night. "I think everyone on board was more or less engaged in the firing into the hold. By daylight it was practically quiet. A Mr Scott was wounded during the day. By night the firing had started again. Mr Wilson threw lights into the hold to direct the aim. Next day all was quiet, and the slaves were invited to come out. Five came out, unaided; nine wounded had to be assisted; sixteen were severely wounded, and sixty were dead. The dead were at once thrown overboard. The sixteen severely wounded men were also thrown overboard.'"'

Castieau recorded: 'Fallon was the one who gave the strongest evidence against the prisoners. He detailed fully the story of the kidnapping and related that after a fight with the natives who resisted being captured and swam for their lives, Morris on two occasions deliberately shot and killed a black man, also that on one occasion when the boat was returning to the ship four or five wounded natives in the water were passed, Mount who was in charge of the boat refusing to take them on board, saying that they were no use. The poor wretches were thus left to perish.'

20 December the case was concluded. Castieau records: 'Went to the court and remained there for some time. Heard Mr Ireland address the jury. His defence was that the prisoners committed no murder on the date fixed. This was the night when there was so much shooting into the hold. He argued that all the natives who were killed were shot by Murray and others, not the prisoners, the next morning when they fired through the bulkheads. The learned counsel drew a plausible picture of the utter barbarism of the Fijians, spoke of the cannibal husband, the cannibal wife and the cannibal baby, said the labour traffic was absolutely necessary in order that the fairest islands in the world should be brought under proper culture and their inhabitants civilized and Christianized. He pointed out that the licences given to ships to procure labour was an admission of the necessity of the traffic, a traffic which could not be carried on successfully without some amount of violence. He implied that the natives got what they brought upon themselves, not in an attempt to escape but in the endeavour to revenge their loss of liberty by seizing the ship and murdering and eating their late captors. Mr Ireland denounced Dr Murray and laid the atrocity that was committed on the doctor's shoulders. The Chief Justice summed up against the prisoners though he gave Mount some credit for having on two occasions acted with an appearance of humanity. The jury retired at six o'clock and at ten brought in a verdict of aggravated manslaughter against the prisoners. The judge said there was no such offence as aggravated manslaughter and the verdict was recorded as one of manslaughter.'



28 December 1872 *The Argus* reported on the Intercolonial Musical Festival: 'The programme was divided into three parts, the first of which was almost wholly devoted to the production of a new cantata, composed expressly for the occasion by Signor Giorza. The text, of which this work is the musical setting, is from the pen of Mr Marcus Clarke, and displays much of the lively fancy which that writer is known to possess.' *The Argus* published Clarke's text, 'Proi; or, At the Dawning'.

Clarke spent Christmas 1872 and New Year 1873 up-country at Ledcourt. Elliott notes that short of money, he persuaded his sister-in-law Rose's husband, L. L. Lewis, to back a bill for him, and while away he borrowed a further £104 from John Holt, the manager of the Ledcourt station, and £50 from Nathaniel Walter Swan.

In his introduction to his edition of Swan's novel, *Luke Miver's Harvest*, Harry Heseltine summarizes Swan's career. Born in Monaghan in 1834 and educated at the same school Duffy had attended ten years earlier, Swan emigrated to Australia in 1854 and became editor of the *Ararat Advertiser* in 1861. In November 1863 he married Mary Ellen O'Brien, daughter of the licensee of the Freemason's Hotel, her age variously given as seventeen and twenty-two.

Clarke had first met Swan when visiting his uncle, Judge James Langton Clarke, who lived next door to the office of *The Advertiser* at Ararat. In 1869 Swan had become editor of the *Pleasant Creek News*. In the issue for 5 November 1870 he published Clarke's story 'A Mining Township', the same day that it appeared in *The Australasian*. The story also appeared in *The*

Brisbane Courier and *The Queenslander*. Swan appears in Clarke's story, his name ornithologically mutated to Daw, as editor of the *Quartzborough Chronicle and Grumbler's Gully Gazette*: 'Daw writes about four columns a day, and is paid £250 a year. His friends say he ought to be in Melbourne, but he is afraid to give up a certainty, so he stays, editing his paper and narrowing his mind, yearning for some intellectual intercourse with his fellow-creatures.'

C. E. Sayers records in his history of Stawell, *Shepherd's Gold*, that Swan was a member of the Yorick, and kept in touch with Clarke, who sent him a signed copy of *Old Tales*. Swan returned to Ararat in August 1872 and edited *The Advertiser* there until 1877, after which he became part proprietor and editor of the *Stawell Chronicle*. From 1873 until his death in 1884 he regularly contributed fiction to *The Australasian*.

Clarke's marriage with Marian was now unhappy, and he had fallen into some sort of liaison with her elder sister, Rose – no longer called Rosa now that she had left the stage. Their correspondence is preserved in Mitchell Library. Clarke wrote of his wife to Rose: 'I found her a young and merry girl and I have made her a sad, petulant woman of her, mine the fault poor soul not hers.'

6 January 1873 Clarke wrote to Rose: 'I have been away at Ledcourt – the mountain station – and go to Ararat tonight by the coach. I am better in health and moral tone. I had a long day after cattle in the ranges, and on the following day rode up in the early morning as high as I could get and there tethered my horse and walked up to the highest peak, or rather climbed. There I lay down in the scrub and "had it out with God and my soul" until dark. I see clearly now my weakness and my wickedness. Rose, we have both done wrong. I have been more to blame than you ... I arrived at this conclusion. I love you, passionately, – there is no need of words, all that is meant when a man like me says to a woman like you "I love you" is meant by the word love as I use it ... love to the fullest of mental and physical meaning, love with brain, heart and body. Do you understand? Now our love as it is must be always incomplete, fruitless, barren. I accept this condition of it, though I tell you honestly it does not satisfy me ... in my solitude in the hills, I concluded this; *I voluntarily married a young girl whom I made love me. I must accept my fate and be manly, honest and strong.* I owe a duty to my wife, my children, my own honour. That duty must be paid ...

'My ambitions are defeated and weighed down by debt, by cares of family and mill-house work. I give in and take the usual stone instead of bread. – I will make the world believe that I prefer granite to flour and flint to seed cake.'

18 and 25 January 1873 *The Australasian* published Clarke's 'Holiday Peak', in which his unfulfilled hopes of literary success in London are allowed expression in a story about alternative futures, set in the mountain region in which he had been staying. He turns back to memories of his former school friend Gerard Manley Hopkins, and to speculations about what alternative futures he and Gerard might have had. He knew from Cyril that Gerard, after studying at Balliol College, Oxford, had come under the influence of Cardinal Newman. He had been received into the Roman Catholic Church in 1866, two years later becoming a novitiate of the Society of Jesus at Manresa in Roehampton. 'I am not surprised,' Clarke wrote to Cyril. 'I always thought he had

a leaning that way. Indeed, for an imaginative, clever *and yet timid mind* the Romish Church is the only one which satisfies; the others are but “leather and prunella.”“ At the time that Clarke was writing ‘Holiday Peak’ Gerard was at St Mary’s Hall seminary at Stonyhurst in Lancashire, resident there from 1870 until August 1873. The creator of Sherlock Holmes, Arthur Conan Doyle, was a schoolboy at Stonyhurst School at the same time.

It is not known whether Gerard was ever aware of Clarke’s successful career as a writer. Cyril Hopkins kept in contact with both Marcus and Gerard, and there were opportunities for Cyril to mention Marcus’s emergent literary career. Gerard, his own attempts at publication rarely successful, may not have wanted to know. Clarke had known of and shared Gerard’s literary and artistic interests during their schooldays, but, like most people, seems to have been unaware of the continuation of Gerard’s vocation as a poet. 21 August 1884 Gerard wrote to Robert Bridges that only eleven friends had been given his poetry to read. The first collection, edited by Bridges, did not appear until 1918.



In ‘Holiday Peak’ Clarke speculates on how Gerard’s skills as a visual artist might have developed:

‘Passing by an old house which stood back from the others in the terrace, my attention was caught by a crimson scarf trailing from one of the upper windows. “An artist lives there,” was my first thought, for nowhere in the world save in the pictures of Prout do we see bits of colour floating about in that fashion.

““Yes, you are right,” said a young man, emerging from the well-dressed crowd which throngs in spring the steps of the Academy.

‘It was Gerard! Gerard my boy friend, who fled from Oxford to Stonyhurst, and embraced the discipline of Loyola. “Gerard, what means this?”

““Dear old fellow,” said he, putting his arm round my neck in the fond old schoolboy fashion, “it means that I thought better of my resolve, and followed out the natural bent of my talents. My picture, the ‘Death of Alcibiades,’ is the talk of the year. I shall soon be as famous as you.”

““As I! You jest. A poor devil banished to Bush Land, tied neck and heels in debt, soon slips out of the memory even of his friends.”

““So you persist in that dream about Australia! Surely you know that the fortune was recovered; that your year of poverty but served to correct your boyish extravagances, and that in easy circumstances you banished Poins and Pistol, and settled down to the career you chose!”

““Gerard, you are laughing at me!”

““Come into your own house, then, and be convinced,” said Gerard.

‘My house, it appeared, was a villa at Richmond; the railway station was sufficiently near to take me into town when town-talk was needed, and yet the cottage in its charm of park and river was sufficiently far from London smoke to suffer one’s soul to breathe freely.

““I wonder,” said Gerard, “that with the horses you keep you *ever* travel by the train?”

“My horses, then, are considered good?”

“Horses and books are your only extravagance. It is lucky that your income is not sufficiently large to suffer you to indulge a taste for pictures. You had better put down your yacht, and buy my ‘Death of Cromwell.’”

“No, no,” I said dreamily, accepting this novel position; “I always had a taste for yachting – but come in and let us converse.”

“You dine with Carabas tonight, remember,” said Gerard; “Balthazar Claës and Byles Gridley will be there. I know you affect to dislike dinners, but the marchioness is a good soul, and you must not disappoint her.”

“True,” said I, “she is; and after presenting my eldest daughter, too. I shall certainly come.”

“The *Superfine Review* has cut up your last book, as usual,” remarked Gerard, turning over the papers on the horseshoe-table; “but to an author whose readers are counted by millions, and to whom Chapman and Hall give £5,000 a volume, a sneer in the *Superfine* is not of much consequence.”

“No, indeed,” I replied, feeling much as if someone had taken away my head and left me a bubble of air in place of it. “Besides, I write for the *Slaughterer*, and the two papers are at daggers drawn.”

“Ah! lucky fellow,” said Gerard, throwing open the window to inhale the perfume of my rose-garden. “How different things *might have been* if you hadn’t taken your uncle’s advice.”

“You are right,” said I, “but help yourself to wine, and let us walk somewhere. To tell you the truth, my head feels a little queer this morning.”

“That is often the case,” returned Gerard, “when one first comes to Holiday Peak, but you will soon get used to our mountain air. Order your horses, and we will go and call on Mostyn. He didn’t marry the widow after all, and is still the same jolly fellow as of old.”

“Ay, I remember how he used to take me up from Aldershot in the baggage-train and introduce to my schoolboy eyesight the wonders of London at midnight. Pray, are the Armida-gardens still existent?”

“I don’t know what you mean. Mostyn never took you to London with him. You were never in the Armida-gardens in all your life.”

“Thank goodness, Gerard! Are you sure?”

“Quite certain. You *might have* wasted your youth in such places, and got into no end of mischief, had not your father kept such a strict and kindly eye upon you.”

“Ah!” said I, “you are right. Let us, then, remain at home to-day. Mostyn can wait.”

“As you please,” said Gerard. “Here is the end of *Denis Duval*. Have you read it?”

“The end of *Denis Duval*! Why, poor Thackeray died before he finished it.”

“Nonsense! He is as hearty as you or I. I met him at Dickens’s (they are great friends now, you know) the other day, and he never looked better. If it had not been for his excellent constitution, and the attention of Dr Lydgate, however, he might have been dead long ago.”

“Gerard, my dear fellow,” said I, rising, “I – I feel a little confused; leave me for a while. We will meet at dinner.”

“Very well,” said Gerard. “I will take Constantia for a drive.”

“Constantia! What, not the girl we – ?”

“The same, dear old fellow.”

“And she did not marry Count Caskowsky?”

“Count Caskowsky be confounded! No; she married me. We have three children. *Sans adieu!*”

‘I fell back in my easy chair, *my* easy chair, stupefied. I must be dreaming! But no, the well-bred presence of my Swiss valet, as he laid out my dress clothes, was too palpable a reality!’

Clarke’s story was a hope of what might have been, a hashish fantasy, an opium dream. As a clue, indeed, Ah Yung is there with his opium pipe. ‘Me no cook. Me Chinese gentleman. Me *mighthabeen* cook if ...’ The previous month in his Noah’s Ark column in *The Australasian*, 7 December 1872, the character Marston, in some ways identifiable with Clarke, had remarked: ‘I sometimes experiment upon myself, and after one has eaten hashish a depression of spirit follows.’



24 April 1873 *The Argus* published Clarke’s interview with Michel Seringue, who was in hiding in Melbourne after escaping from the ship transporting him to imprisonment in New Caledonia for his participation in the Paris Commune. The details of the brutal repression of the commune created quite a stir: “Thirty thousand men were shot, Monsieur. The process was simple. From the prisoners ten men were brought. Any trial? Rien! Rien! Rien! They looked at the hands – black with powder. At the shoulder – the mark of the gunstock. On les fusillaient! (They were shot). Ten more were brought, and made to put the bodies in vans. Then – *they* were shot!” Nothing could be more simple.’ Clarke made no secret of his sympathy for Seringue: ‘I am not an admirer of the communists, but I confess that I sincerely hope the poor devil has seen the last of his troubles ...’

At the same time Kendall was being incarcerated again. 23 April 1873 the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported: ‘Henry Kendall was brought before the Court for protection. Doctors Egan and Macdonough deposed that they had examined the defendant, and found that his mind was impaired. To be sent to the receiving house for lunatics.’

30 April Kendall was readmitted to Gladesville hospital. On the previous occasion he had spent three and a half weeks there. This time it was two months. Donovan Clarke recorded the details in ‘New Light on Henry Kendall’.

‘Ref. No. 1730:

‘Form of mental disorder ... mania

‘Supposed cause ... intemperance

‘Duration of attack ... two weeks

‘Previous attacks ... two

‘*Further history*: Since his discharge he appears to have led the life of a Bohemian and to have plunged deeper and deeper into debauchery. His wife left him some months ago and returned to her relatives owing to his ill-treatment of her and his constant drinking. He has written less and less for the papers and has lately been in a starving condition. He imagined that he was accused of murdering a child.

‘Mental and bodily conditions, symptoms, etc.

‘April 30. On admission. His hair has been cut owing to its dirty condition. He is extremely nervous and in a depressed condition of mind and body. He is fairly rational but there is a jerkiness of manner and a changefulness of thought which is not wholesome. He is sleepless by night and morbid and melancholy by day. He is very emaciated and pale. The secretions are in good order, the appetite is good and he has apparently started on the road to recovery.

‘May 9: He is picking up flesh, looks brighter and better; takes food and sleeps under the influence of chloral fairly well.

‘May 31: He appears quite rational but is depressed in spirits and irritable in manner. His general health is better.

‘June 30: Seems now quite well.

‘July 7: Discharged.’



In 1873 Clarke published his first collection of short stories, *Holiday Peak and Other Tales*. He chose ‘Holiday Peak’, with its reflections on life’s lost opportunities, as the title story, and carefully shaped the selection, choosing stories and sketches set in the bush and country towns, and excluding those he had written with urban and European settings.

He wrote to George Gordon McCrae: ‘Robertson, who is publishing me a little book desires an illustrated cover, and has asked me to supply him with a design for the wood-engraver. The cover is to be printed in two colours. He will pay for the design ... on paper merely ready to be copied by the engraver on to the block ... one guinea. Will you supply us with a design? The size of the book is the same as the small edition of Bret Harte. I send you a proof of the story which I think would illustrate best, with a mark at the spot which seems good for an illustration. I shall be in the library until 4.30 p.m. or 5 p.m. Can you look in, and tell the boy Jones to go aft and take the sheep-shank etc.?’

Hugh McCrae copied the letter and affixed it to a presentation copy of *Holiday Peak* Clarke sent to George, with his father’s explanation of the last line: ‘Old joke of J.J.S. About sending that boy Jones aft to take the “sheep shank out of that there watch tackle.” A mission *à propos* of nothing in particular.’ McCrae’s copy is now in Fisher Library, University of Sydney. Another presentation copy, to Arthur Patchett Martin, is in the Baillieu Library, University of Melbourne.

There seems to have been some delay in payment to McCrae. McLaren reproduces McCrae’s sketch of himself as a kneeling pavement artist being moved on by a gendarme, preserved in the State Library of Victoria: ‘BOUTEZ EN AVANT (MOVE ON) WALK YOUR CHALKS.’ On

the pavement is spelled out above a couple of fish: 'I AM STARVING & OTHER TALES BY MARCUS CLARKE.' On an adjacent wall is the inscription: 'O CLAR(K)ISS)ME! O HOLIAAY PEAKISSIME!! IMPECUNIOSUS SUM !!!! CREDE EXPERTO GGMcC.' 14 June Clarke wrote to George Robertson asking him to send a guinea to McCrae.



The Argus reviewed *Holiday Peak* rather unhelpfully, 26 May 1873: 'Mr Robertson has issued another of those small, well got-up volumes which he sends forth from his establishment from time to time just to show us, we suppose, that if original literature does not flourish in Victoria, it is not for want of a publisher. Mr Marcus Clarke is, in this instance, the provider of the entertainment, and everyone who buys his book will admit that it affords as much amusement as can be reasonably expected for a shilling. At least this will be the case in almost every instance where the purchaser has not had any previous knowledge of Mr Clarke's writings. "Holiday Peak," we believe, appears now for the first time, but the other tales have been published before, either in *The Australasian* or some other periodical. We submit that there is a nice ethical question involved in this modern system of making up books out of a quantity of secondhand material. In the case under notice, we have one paper with which the reader makes acquaintance for the first time. It occupies some 16 pages out of 84, and it must be admitted that the novelty bears a very small proportion to the old matter. People who buy the book will be caught by the name of the short new story, little dreaming probably that they are already acquainted with the greater part of the remaining contents. Mr Clarke, no doubt, can plead custom as his excuse for this mild deception on the public, but we cannot avoid the conclusion that anything calculated to mislead is a custom more honoured in the breach than the observance. However, we will say no more on this point, merely remarking in passing that we are astonished that a gentleman of Mr Clarke's versatility and facile powers of expression should think it necessary to come before the public with a rehash of his old works instead of contributing to the general amusement by a fresh exercise of his talents.

'The stories given are eight in number "Holiday Peak," "An Up-country Town-ship," "Grumbler's Gully," "Horace in the Bush," "Pretty Dick," "How the Circus Came to Bullocktown," "Poor Jo," and "Arcades Ambo." "Holiday Peak" is a story told by a Mr Marston to "Little Nelly," but, sooth to say, unless this young lady was precocious and learned beyond her years, the narrator must have somewhat wearied her with a discourse which shot far above her head. "Holiday Peak" is also known to some folks as "Mount Might-ha' been" – a fact which is sufficient to show the whole drift of its meaning. We are all perpetually travelling to this Mount Might-ha' been. Although the pathway which leads to its summit is rugged and thorny, it has a fascination about it which attracts in spite of ourselves. Again and again we have come down from this anything but delectable mountain footsore and weary, and confessing with an aching heart that all is vanity; and yet in a little while we find our steps tending thitherward again. We are bent on looking back once more upon the road we have traversed, as though we expected to

see it brilliant with flowers, instead of strewn with the wrecks of blighted hopes, and lost loves, and exalted aspirations.

“‘Holiday Peak’ is worth perusal, if only for the thoughts it conjures up. We must confess that it would be more pleasant reading if there were less straining after rhythm in the language. An even flow of words is no doubt a great thing in a writer, and is pleasant enough when the sense is not sacrificed to its attainment. There is some “fine writing” in parts of this little yarn, of which it is difficult to discover the exact purport. Mr Clarke has talent sufficient to save him from the necessity of descending to fustian. Of the other tales, the one which takes our fancy most is “Pretty Dick.” It tells of a child lost in the bush, and in point of imagination and style will, we think, compare favourably with any of Mr Clarke’s writings. The idea is very well worked out, and the fatal termination of the poor boy’s wanderings is told with that simplicity which is the sign of true art.’

The Brisbane Courier was overall more positive, 12 December 1873, and equally enthusiastic over ‘Pretty Dick’: ‘The story is beautifully and touchingly told. There are rare touches of pathos in it, and some bright glints of bush scenery. Kingsley, in his Australian painting, has never done anything so good or so true to nature as this. Pretty Dick is a slight sketch, and we have scarcely time to learn to love him, but he is nearly as loveable as Little Nell, and thus exercising his genius, Mr Clarke should learn, as he may, to rival the more elaborate art of the great masters. He is quite fit to take his place beside them.’



23 November 1873 Trollope wrote to Clarke: ‘Many thanks for your book which I have read with great pleasure. I am so much out of the way of reviews, – always avoiding any personal contact with critics as critics, because of my own business as an author, – that I fear I can hardly assist you. But I will do so, should it come in my way.’ Commentators have assumed the book Clarke sent Trollope was *His Natural Life*, but this was not published in volume form until April 1874. It is most likely to have been *Holiday Peak and Other Tales*, published earlier in 1873.

Trollope’s account of his Australian tour, *Australia and New Zealand*, also appeared in 1873. Robertson published an Australian edition and *The Australasian* serialized it. Trollope devotes a page to Australian literature, effectively denying that there is any: ‘The production of books must follow the production of other things, and the growth of literature will be slow. Victoria, however, and the Australian colonies generally, have produced many books. I cannot say that as yet their volumes are to be found crowding the shelves of European libraries.’ After enumerating and dismissing the sort of books produced, in particular poetry – ‘how vast a number of small volumes’ – he then singles out one prose writer for sole mention: ‘I cannot thus allude to the literature of the colony at large without mentioning the name of Mr Marcus Clarke, of Melbourne, whose Australian tales are not only known familiarly by all colonists, but are almost as familiar to English readers.’ The ‘tales’ he mentions must be *Old Tales of a Young Country*,

since *Holiday Peak and Other Tales* was published in May 1873, after Trollope's *Australia and New Zealand* had appeared.

The Argus, 4 April 1873, noticed with pleasure Trollope's compliment to Clarke. Clarke was one of only two Australian writers Trollope mentioned by name. Gordon was the other. Trollope heard about him when he visited John Riddoch's Yallum Park station in May 1872: 'Before leaving England a friend of mine had put into my hand a volume of ballads, which had been sent home to him from Australia, called *Bush Ballads*, or *Galloping Rhymes*. He told me that the author had been a young Scotch gentleman who had gone out young, but had not done well. He had taken to a sporting life, and had then fallen into a sad melancholy, and had – died.'

Edwards and Joyce in their edition of *Australia* note that Trollope had originally written 'destroyed himself', but this was changed for publication. He continues: 'I read the ballads and was greatly struck by their energy. It was evident that the writer of them had lived out of the literary world, and that he had lacked that care and spared himself that labour which criticism and study will produce, and which are necessary to finished work; – but of the man's genius there could be no doubt. There was one called "Britomarte" which alone entitled him to be called a poet. I found that he had lived in this neighbourhood, near to Mount Gambier, and that he had been well loved by many friends. For a while he was in the South Australian parliament, but parliamentary work had not suited him. He was given to the riding of racers, – and was prone to write about horses and the race-course. In the literary traces which I found of him in the neighbourhood, there was but scanty allusion to other matters, except to racing, and to the melancholy, thoughtful, solitary, heart-eating life which a bushman lives. His horse had been his companion when he was alone, – and when he got back to the world horses were his delight. They are seldom safe companions for a man prone to excitement. I heard wondrous tales of the courage of his riding. As a steeplechase rider he was well known in Melbourne; – but few seemed to have heard of him as a poet. It is as a poet that I speak of him now. His name was A. L. Gordon.'



Clarke dedicated the *Holiday Peak* volume to the American writer Oliver Wendell Holmes (1809–94), whose *Autocrat at the Breakfast Table* had first appeared as a regular column in the *Atlantic Monthly* 1857–58, followed by *The Professor at the Breakfast Table* (1860) and *The Poet at the Breakfast Table* (1872). These essays were a partial model for Clarke's Noah's Ark column. Clarke had earlier sent a copy of 'Pretty Dick' to Holmes, and Mackinnon quotes Holmes reply from Boston, 23 December 1872: 'I received your letter and MS, with the newspaper extract, some two or three days ago, and sat down almost at once and read the story. It interested me deeply, and I felt as much like crying over the fate of "Pretty Dick" as I did when I was a child and read the "Babes in the Wood." I *did* cry then – I will *not* say whether I cried over "Pretty Dick" or not. But I will say it is a *very* touching story, *very* well told.'

McLaren's listing of Clarke's correspondence in Mitchell Library notes half a dozen items from Holmes. Holmes sent 'Pretty Dick' to the novelist W. D. Howells, chief editor at the *Atlantic Monthly*. Howells did not accept it, but told Holmes he was sending it to *Young Folks*, who seem not to have accepted it either. But Frances Cashel Hoey, wife of Duffy's close associate John Cashel Hoey, successfully achieved acceptance of the only short story of Clarke's published in England in his lifetime, 'Grumbler's Gully'. It appeared as 'An Australian Mining Township' in *All the Year Round, incorporating Household Words*, 22 February 1873, the magazine founded and edited by Charles Dickens. It was now edited by Charles Dickens junior, whose letter of acceptance is preserved in the Mitchell Library. 15 July 1873. It had a vast readership and its circulation 'never dipped below 100,000', according to Peter Ackroyd. Clarke tried for further English publication, sending 'Pretty Dick', 'Human Repetends' and a new article on 'Port Arthur' to the *Cornhill Magazine*, without success.

In July 1873 Clarke's recollection of his visit to Port Arthur appeared in *The Argus* in three parts, prompted by news of the closure of the prison: 'Intelligence has at last reached us of the final dismantling of the last relic which we inspected with so much interest three years ago.'

In the first article he established an historical context: 'In 1830 occurred the war of extermination, known as the Black War. The settlers banded themselves together, drew a cordon of armed men across the island, drove the natives to the extremity of a narrow neck of land known as Tasman's Peninsula, and slaughtered them at their leisure.' Then, as now, assertions of genocide provoked angry denial, and *The Argus* published letters challenging Clarke's account. Clarke replied by quoting from his earlier 'The Adventures of Captain Jorgensen,' one of the 'Old Stories Retold' collected in *Old Tales of a Young Country*: 'It was as though the blacks, like rats driven to the utmost extremity of a quay, should be compelled to take to the water. Colonel Arthur, however, did not push matters to this extremity. Having closed in upon East Bay Neck, and driven the natives into the stockyard, he broke up his forces and gave the volunteers leave to return to their homes, "to prepare for a second series of operations," which ultimately resulted in something very like the complete destruction of the native race.'

There were more letters of denial to *The Argus*, and when Mackinnon included the Port Arthur recollections in the *Austral Edition*, he omitted the first of the three articles with its reference to the war of extermination.



7 July 1873 Kendall was discharged from Gladesville hospital. 16 July his one-time beloved Rose Bennett married. A. G. Stephens wrote in 'Kendalliana – III' in *The Bulletin*, 9 July 1930: 'Rose Bennett married the pushing English canvasser for the *Town and Country Journal* associated with the *Evening News* under the Bennett proprietary. This was Henniker Heaton, who presently took his wife to England, where he became a member of the House of Commons and gained credit as a postal reformer.' James Tyrell adds: 'Incidentally, Kendall was the only man whose personal weakness Henniker Heaton stamps in print in his *Australian Dictionary of Dates*. The reference

to Kendall's weakness is contained in this sentence: Overwork unfortunately led him into intemperate habits, but in 1874 he entirely recovered his former excellent reputation.'

Friends now arranged employment for Kendall away from Sydney. Sutherland records in Turner and Sutherland: 'Kendall received the appointment of a newspaper at Grafton, a town where he was well known and valued. The steamer he sailed in called for a few hours at Newcastle by the way. Kendall was one of the passengers who went ashore, but not one of those who returned on board.'

After drinking away whatever money he had, and failing to find any way to earn a living in Newcastle, he set out to walk back to Sydney. Reaching Gosford in October or November 1873, he was befriended by the Fagan family. Various accounts have been given of how they met. Reed writes in his dissertation that Charles is said to have met Kendall at Campbell's Hotel in Gosford, and his father Peter Fagan brought Kendall to their home. Peter Fagan had been transported from Ireland in 1820, aged 27. After the expiration of his sentence, he took up land in Brisbane Water north of Sydney, and eventually developed a timber business, which he ran with his seven sons, exporting cedar to America. The eldest son Charles Fagan, born in 1832, was a justice of the peace and magistrate. In *Henry Kendall: His Later Years* Kendall's son Frederick quotes Henry's tribute to the Fagans: 'these gentlemen, who worked so hard on my behalf, put up with so much for my sake, and endured so patiently my peculiarities, can never be compensated – never be forgotten.'

The Fagans nursed Kendall back to recovery and gave him work as a storekeeper and accountant. They had experienced their own sufferings back in 1865 when Peter Fagan's wife, daughter, and sister-in-law died after Peter mistakenly gave them strychnine instead of quinine.

The Fagans' house is now the Henry Kendall Cottage and Historical Museum at West Gosford. In *The Fagans, the Cottage, and Kendall* Joan Fenton notes: 'in the little room which the poet Henry Kendall occupied may be seen the colonial sofa on which he slept and on which he carved his initials.'

A plaque on the outer wall records its history: 'This cottage formerly known as "Cooranbean" was built by Peter Fagan in 1836-40. It was owned by members of his immediate family until 1921.

'Peter Fagan, of County Meath in Ireland, arrived at Sydney Cove in 1821 on the *Lord Sidmouth*.

'In 1830 he took up a land grant of 100 acres at Brisbane Water and began farming and raising cattle. His first home was built on the waterfront near the end of what is now Collard Road, Point Clare.

'In 1836 he bought 60 acres of land here at West Gosford. He erected this cottage with locally quarried sandstone, using convict labour. The cottage was licensed in 1840 and known as the Red Cow Inn. Certain outbuildings no longer exist.

'In 1838 Peter Fagan contracted to bring the mail from Wiseman's Ferry to Brisbane Water by horseback. The family's connection with the horseback conveyance of mail continued at intermittent periods until 1884.

‘The Fagans were keen racing men and bred champion horses, one being the bay mare “Mabel,” winner of the Lord Mayor’s Cup at Randwick, Sydney, 1879.

‘Peter Fagan died in 1876, and his wife Margaret (formerly Gilligan) in 1865. They had a family of 7 sons and 2 daughters.

‘It was in this cottage that three of his sons cared for the poet Henry Kendall during the period 1874–1875 prior to his employment at the Fagan business in Camden Haven.

‘A fine orchard located near this building was noted for its citrus and stone fruits.’

Another plaque erected by the Brisbane Water Historical Society in 1952 records: ‘Here in 1874-5 Henry Clarence Kendall found friendship, peace and inspiration to write “Mooni,” “Narrara,” “Names upon a Stone” & other deathless verse.’

In ‘Memories of Henry Kendall: The Rock Pool Near Gosford’ by E. D. in *The Sydney Mail*, 10 June 1931, Joseph Fagan recalled that Kendall was always known as Harry around Gosford: ‘He used to write down there in the glen, always in the early morning and after sunset. At other times he gave us a hand on the farm, and – well, he was just like one of us boys in the family. My father used to do a bit of writing, too.’ Joseph had the mail run, a two day trip into Sydney and back. He recalled that ‘Harry sometimes would come along part of the way, always up the mountain to his favourite spot at the head of the glen, and there would often spend the whole day by the waterfalls or in the darkened fern-grown recesses, coming back to the farm when night fell, while I went on my way.’

There is another plaque on a sandstone pillar south of Gosford on the Pacific Highway, inscribed with a verse from Kendall’s ‘Names upon a Stone’:

To Kendall’s Glen
 There was a rock-pool in a glen
 Beyond Narrara’s sands,
 The mountains shut it in from men
 In flowerful fairy lands;
 But once we found its dwelling place –
 The lovely and the lone –
 And, in a dream, I stooped to trace
 Our names upon a stone.

H. Kendall.

R.A.H.S.

Reporting the unveiling ceremony, 24 April 1931, the *Woy Woy Herald* gave some further recollections by Joseph Fagan: ‘It was, he said, a far call from the Christmas Day of 1874 when Henry Kendall “stooped to trace their names upon a stone” to the present day. On that drowsy summer afternoon he and his brothers walked with Henry Kendall up the valley and sat by “the rock pool in the glen.” Before leaving they chipped their initials on the stone, little dreaming then that this would one day become historical. It was his privilege to be closely associated with Henry Kendall for the last eleven years of his life and his gentle disposition and his literary attainments made Kendall a fascinating companion. After tea in the evenings when Kendall would light his

pipe it was a treat and an education to listen to him. There did not seem to be a subject under the sun of which he was not master. It made one think of the words of Oliver Goldsmith, “And still the wonder grew that one small head could carry all he knew.” In the days when Kendall knew the glen it was a beautiful spot, but later the woodcutter found it and came and laid it waste. Immense trees were cut down, blocking the pretty water-course and it made him sad to see the havoc wrought by careless vandalism.’



Glad to get rid of *His Natural Life* as Massina may have been, the *Australian Journal* nonetheless eight months later began to serialize Clarke’s *Long Odds*, which had originally appeared in the *Colonial Monthly* 1868–69. It ran from February through till September 1873. The following year it was serialized in *The Brisbane Courier* and *The Queenslander*.

12 September 1873 *The Argus* reported that Clarke, ‘six years ago an unknown contributor to this paper’, was promoted to Sub-librarian at the Public Library, when Henry Sheffield was appointed Chief Librarian following the death of the founding librarian, Augustus Tulk. McLaren notes that the Public Record Office, Melbourne holds Clarke’s request for a letter of support from Haddon, the *Argus* editor, and Haddon’s assurance that Clarke had written nothing objectionable to the trustees. According to Patchett Martin, Clarke received a salary of some £400 a year – “‘just a sufficient sum,” as he used to say, “to keep one’s pen idle.”“

And then in November Clarke’s six-year association with the *Argus* group came to an end. Pacini records that the Victoria Racing Club had refused to issue complimentary press passes for its Spring Meeting, ‘on the grounds that there had been applications for over 100, when thirty would have been more than adequate. In due course it settled on issuing twenty.’ In the meantime *The Argus* responded with a threat not to run any report of the Melbourne Cup. The *Herald* chose to have it both ways, boycotting attendance at the meeting but nonetheless publishing a report, 6 November 1873, ‘The Cup, Told by the Camera’: ‘By a judicious employment of the camera obscura, a person could absolutely sit at the editorial desk of *The Herald*, and still see the racecourse at Flemington.’

The ‘report which, with eyes fixed upon the picture before us, we dictated through a speaking tube to a shorthand writer’ was of course a hoax. It read like something out of a novel. Indeed, it was out of a novel. Clarke had adapted it from his account of a race in Chapter 50 of *Long Odds*. It was the passage that Kendall had quoted admiringly in his comments on Clarke in ‘Notes upon Men and Books – 8’ in *The Freeman’s Journal* the previous year, remarking, ‘That bit about the finish is capital’.

The manager of *The Argus*, Gowen Evans, was not amused. He wrote to Clarke: ‘I quite admit having told you that we should not be too anxious to enquire for whom you wrote, but I don’t recollect having been informed that you were writing for the *Herald*. It seems to me that if I had known, I should not have consented to that particular connection. The *Herald* has broken every

rule of professional etiquette, and I should not consider it safe to allow anyone connected with that office to come inside ours. I don't mean to insinuate that you would deliberately give any information gleaned from your access to our office, but you might unintentionally mention things that would most certainly be by the *Herald* people put to any use that might suit their interest or their malice. Therefore you must choose between us and the *Herald*, and as long as *I* have anything to do with the editorial arrangements, I will not submit to be brought in contact with anyone whom I know to come from that office.'

Mackinnon remarks: 'No *independent* journalist could well be blamed for withdrawing himself from so autocratic a patronage, even at pecuniary loss.'

Clarke and the *Argus* management seem to have been equally intransigent. Clarke's friend Haddon was away in Europe in 1873, so may not have been available to mediate, even assuming he had wanted to. It was the end of an extraordinarily productive relationship between Clarke and the daily *Argus*, the weekly *Australasian* and the monthly *Australasian Sketcher* that provided the material for four books – *The Peripatetic Philosopher*, *Old Tales of a Young Country*, *Holiday Peak* and *Four Stories High* – as well as numerous uncollected stories and the Buncle Correspondence and Noah's Ark columns.

The end of the year saw Twinkle Twinkle Little Star or, Harlequin Jack Frost, Little Tom Tucker and The Old Woman that Lived in a Shoe, A Grand Comic Xmas pantomime, written by John Strachan, Esq., M.D.A.S.L., localized, vocalized, organized, familiarized, and generally acclimatized by Marcus Clarke, Esq., and produced at the Theatre Royal, Melbourne, on Boxing Night, December 26th, 1873, under the management of Messrs Harwood, Stewart, Hennings and Coppin. The music was by F. Coppin.

Clarke used the experience of the production for a piece in his new 'Wicked World' series, 'Rehearsing a Pantomime' in the *Weekly Times*, 31 January 1874.

"What we want is Rot! The public like Rot, the orchestra like Rot, I like Rot. Write Rot!" Burbo the manager instructs.

The writer agrees: "If we can only get the critics to CONDEMN the rubbish, Burbo, my boy, we can run it into the first week in February!"

They did indeed successfully run the pantomime into February, 'altogether without parallel owing to the magnificence of the scenery, the music and general accessories', *The Age* remarked, 4 February.

7 February Clarke offered a retraction in the *Weekly Times*: 'H. R. Harwood, of the Theatre Royal, Melbourne, informing me that he considers the character of Burbo in my last week's article, "Rehearsing a Pantomime," to be a portrait of himself, requests me to state that the needful business at the Theatre Royal is conducted with propriety, and that none of the managers "swear at rehearsal" as Burbo is represented to do ... I wish it now and for the future to be understood I refer to no individual, but to a creature created out of the attributes of many individuals. The needful business at the Theatre Royal is conducted with the most strict propriety and the only person who swore at the rehearsal of the pantomime was myself.'

Six months later Clarke so provoked Harwood that a court case ensued.



Through 1874 Clarke wrote regularly for the *Herald* and its associated *Weekly Times*. He had been moving away politically from *The Argus* and its conservative and landed constituency. But he was no more enamoured of the mercantile and professional bourgeoisie. The experience of researching the convict records for *Old Tales* and *His Natural Life* had radicalized him. His impending insolvency encouraged a cynical view, which he expressed in the new year in a twelve-part series for the *Weekly Times*, 'The Wicked World', a Balzacian survey of representative Melbourne bankers, doctors, lawyers, merchants, stockbrokers, and journalists revealed in all their acquisitiveness, pretentiousness and sexual dishonesties.

Having broken with the *Argus* group, Clarke needed a new publishing base to supplement the income he could generate from the *Herald* and *Weekly Times*. An opportunity now arose. Gresley Lukin, born in Launceston in 1840, resigned as clerk of the Supreme Court in Brisbane in November 1873 and became managing editor of *The Brisbane Courier* and its associated weekly *The Queenslander*. Lukin had bought a third share in the Brisbane Newspaper Company and set about improving the two papers. Clarke became a regular contributor with both reprinted and original material, beginning with 'The First Queensland Explorer', 20 December 1873, a story 'Basau: or, the Gypsies of the Sea', 3 January 1874, and then the serialization of *Long Odds* from January to June 1874. 21 August 1875 he began a column in both papers, 'Country Leisure', and the revised book version of *His Natural Life* was serialized in both papers from June 1875 to February 1876. Lukin provided Clarke with significant support in terms both of readership and income at this critical time. In 1880 Lukin went bankrupt from land and mine speculations. In 1890 he bought the radical paper *The Boomerang* from William Lane and brought Henry Lawson up from Sydney to Brisbane to join the staff. Lawson's job lasted for six months, the paper folded in 1892, and Lukin went to New Zealand where he became parliamentary reporter and later editor of the *Wellington Evening Post*.

Withdrawing from the Yorick, Clarke made the café downstairs in the *Argus* building one of his haunts. The Yorick Club history records: 'The Club was neglected for the café, at any rate after 9 or 10 p.m.' The café was run by a Miss Oliver, and Clarke wrote of it in 'Down Camomile Street' in the *Weekly Times*, 17 January 1874: 'Here is the *Peacock* office, with Chips the leader-writer airing his boot-heels in the passage as usual; there the Cassowary Club with Oedipus Quackendrum writing *Punch* copy in the upper window. Underneath the Cassowary window stands ever open the door of the Iphigenia Café and dining rooms, where congregate from morning until evening the scandal-mongers of the metropolis. If a good thing is said at the Woolsack, you will be sure to hear it at the Iphigenia in thirteen minutes. Next to the Café is the Peacock Hotel, with jolly Hans Breitmann at the door. Alas, poor Peacock hotel! Thou has seen many changes since the wits of the town – there were wits in those days – sat at thy table round and bandied jokes at the great Thunderer himself.'

The charms of the Yorick were fading. Castieau recorded in his diary, 16 January 1874: 'I do not think the club is progressing just now and it certainly is not getting more attractive. There is one funny thing that I observe about it and that is its being studiously avoided by any but hard up people; as a rule to be a "Yorick" means to be out at elbows. Some of the fellows that belong to the club I like very much but I begin to think that it would have been better for me to have been contented with the Athenæum and not to have been tickled with the literary and scientific reputation of the Yorick for I fear much in grasping at the shadow I have lost the substance.'

18 April he recorded; 'went to the Club. Left with Semple. Met Marcus Clarke in Swanston Street, and undertook to stamp and post a letter for him.'

6 June 1874 Castieau recorded that to reduce his expenditure he had resigned from the Yorick, and Polly had put his name down for membership of the Melbourne Athenæum. Originally the Mechanics' Institute, founded in 1839 as part of the British movement to provide working men and women with library facilities, it was known as the Melbourne Athenæum to distinguish it from the Athenæum Club. Castieau wrote: 'I have joined that institution as I shall be able to get books there and read all the papers and at the same time bring some books away for home use. The Yorick did not seem to answer for me. I was constantly making it an expensive place of refuge and was doing myself no good with having the reputation of being on intimate terms with the press writers. I must say the company that I met at the Yorick was much more to my taste and that I shall give it up with great reluctance; still I know it will be prudent for me to do so and that Polly will be very glad for me to content myself with the Athenæum and to have no more to do with the Yorick.' The Melbourne Athenæum's annual subscription was ten shillings, whereas the Yorick's was £1. 6s.



In April 1874 *His Natural Life* was published in volume form by George Robertson in Melbourne, selling for seven shillings and sixpence. It was Clarke's fifth book. He dedicated it, as promised, to Sir Charles Gavan Duffy: 'I take leave to dedicate this work to you, not merely because your nineteen years of political and literary life in Australia render it very fitting that any work written by a resident in the colonies, and having to do with the history of past colonial days, should bear your name upon its dedicatory page; but because the publication of my book is due to your advice and encouragement.'

Duffy had been a major architect of the revisions, so the dedication was appropriate. There were other reasons, too. Clarke writes: 'Charles Reade has drawn the interior of a house of correction in England, and Victor Hugo has shown how a French convict fares after the fulfilment of his sentence.' He does not add that Duffy himself had been twice imprisoned by the English for his involvement in Irish independence movements, and had more than twelve months' experience of the interior of a house of correction in Ireland. But the facts were well known. Clarke's dedication of his great novel to Duffy can be seen as a proclamation of his own

increasing alienation from English establishment values. In the serial version of the novel, Dawes finally returned to England. In the book version he drowns. There was no return.

Clarke presented a copy to his old associate: 'J. J. Shillinglaw from the Author "Thank God!" 30 April 74.' Stuart in 'Shillinglaw's Annotations upon *His Natural Life*' notes that he wrote inside the front fly leaf, 3 May: 'Memo, this book cost Marcus Clarke some four or five years hard work off and on which is the reason he writes "Thank God" now that it is finished. In reviewing it for a Melbourne paper I have spent four days doing nothing else than reading it at feverish intervals and I declare that the effect on my mind at these times, and since, has been so horrible that I would not willingly undertake the job again. It is a horribly interesting book and an author must surely require to have a distinctive honest purpose to serve before he *dares* to lift such a veil to the eyes of every reader – young or old. I have been familiar with portion of the monster depicted in the MSS and in its serial form. But in this volume it has become a Frankenstein instinct with a hideous life and it goes to the top of my bookshelves with another – and very comprehensive "Thank God." On the back endpaper of his copy, Shillinglaw added: 'Ah! it is easy to find fault with it – to curse and scold at it – to shudder at it – to get frightened and shiver and want brandy and water over it – nay – even to cry over it – to tear it to pieces (agreeable task) – But to write it ...'

'One of the most horribly fascinating books we have read for a long time,' Shillinglaw wrote in his review of *His Natural Life* for the *Melbourne Herald*, 9 May.

21 May the *Sydney Morning Herald* also reviewed it at length, concluding: 'This remarkable book, with all its defects, is nevertheless, well worth reading, and will, doubtless, be generally read. It is published by Mr George Robertson, of Melbourne, neatly printed by Walker, May, and Company, of MacKillop Street, in that city, and altogether got up in a very creditable manner in a style quite equal to anything of the kind in England.'

Clarke sent complimentary copies around the world. McLaren notes letters from Charles Reade, Oliver Wendell Holmes, and H. M. Hyndman acknowledging receipt of the novel.

C. T. Clarke, who worked for the publisher George Robertson, wrote on 'The Sorrows of Australian Authors' in the *Centennial Magazine*, November 1889: 'Perhaps the finest work of any Australian writer is the powerful novel by the late Marcus Clarke, *His Natural Life*. If success could be anticipated for any Australian book, surely in the case of this one a large sale might have been looked for. Yet on its first publication in Melbourne there was no prodigious result of the kind. A moderate degree of success it certainly achieved, but not of a kind to make either author or publisher jubilant, and it is probable that if an English publisher had not taken over the book it would have languished and perhaps died like so many others of the same author's works – works too, which deserved a much better fate.' C. T. Clarke further recalled in *All About Books*, 19 May 1930, that only when Lord Rosebery visited Australia in 1883-4 and praised the novel did the strong demand for the Australian edition set in. Mackinnon included Rosebery's letter endorsing *His Natural Life* in the *Memorial Volume*.



Whatever hopes of financial return from the book publication of *His Natural Life* Clarke may have had were not fulfilled. Within three months his insolvency was reported in *The Argus*, 8 July 1874: ‘Marcus Clarke, of Greville Street, Prahran, librarian. Causes of insolvency – Losses sustained in the years 1868 and 1869 in the establishment of a magazine called the *Colonial Monthly*, in endeavouring to establish in the year 1869 a publication called *Humbug*, from having to pay large interest on money borrowed in consequence of said losses, and mining speculations. Liabilities, £2,186 6s 6d; assets £505; deficiency £1,681 6s 6d.’

Brian Elliott writes in *Marcus Clarke*: ‘Among the debts Clarke acknowledged were (in round figures) £200 to the moneylender Aaron Waxman, £200 to the Union Bank (his overdraft), £150 to Clarson, Massina & Co., £104 to John Holt ... £50 to Nathaniel Swan ... and other considerable sums owed to his brother-in-law L. L. Lewis, to Dr Aubrey Bowen, to F. F. Baillière, to various wine merchants, and to *The Australasian* Insurance Co., – this last, the largest sum itemized in the schedule, £350 for “money lent and law costs.”’

Clarke wrote insouciantly to Cyril Hopkins, June 1874: ‘I am librarian to the Public Library here, a good place secured by parliamentary vote; two hundred thousand volumes and five hundred a year. I make some five hundred more by scribbling “Our Melbourne Correspondence” or some twaddle in a local journal (i.e. as Melbourne correspondent of a country paper). I have written for the press and written two novels. I send you one which I had hoped might meet with notice in London, but which – up to this time – hasn’t ...

‘Everybody says that I am a most fortunate man. Last year I became insolvent – but insolvency is here a matter of no moment, especially to a *fortunate* man ...

‘My wife was an actress and had no fortune of her own except a good temper, and something of originality which pleases me better than money. We get on very well and have three children.’

And then Clarke asked Cyril, ‘you dear old vegetable running to pecuniary seed in Cornhill’, if he remembered ‘the walks with me in Highgate Woods and the story-telling? ... Ah, my dear old boy, you and I shall never live those days over again but I should like to rise up some night, spectre-like, in High Holborn and come into your chambers for a smoke and then *vanish*! Wouldn’t Mrs C. say “Where *have* you been, my dear?” It is doubtful if I shall return to London and, as you say, more than doubtful if you would care about me, or I about you, if we met. How can we control these things? “Marriage and Death and Division make barren our lives” – as sings my Algernon! ...’

As he told Cyril, he was a fortunate man. 1 June 1874 Sir Andrew Clarke assigned Marcus power of attorney over his Australian assets, to act ‘fully and effectually to all intents and purposes whatever as I might or could do if personally present’. Elliott comments: ‘Clarke became cheerful and confident, and far from suffering the logical consequence of being sold up and evicted, was able to remove with his family to a pleasant house at Brighton, from where he made an impression by running up to Melbourne for business by train.’ The powers were renewed in October 1875 and 19 April 1876.

According to an article in the Brighton *Southern Cross*, 25 May 1966, Clarke lived at Maroola, Middle Crescent, Brighton. At some point Walstab lived at 266 New Street. Cyril Hopkins reported one detail: 'Marcus himself reserved from the sale of his father's effects a fine engraving of Millais' well known picture, "A Huguenot." It was hung in the study of his house at Brighton (near Melbourne) and he cherished to the last an extraordinary affection for it. The picture in question is still in the possession of the author's family.'

1 August Castieau records: 'Bought *The Leader* and *The Australasian*. As I was going to the Athenæum I met Marcus Clarke and we walked together so far as the Yarra ferry. Clarke seems all the better for his insolvency. He informed me that no one had appeared at the meeting to oppose him and that he had an order from the assignee to draw his salary. As we went along Swanston Street I invited him to go into Clements in order that we might have a look at the new place just opened. We met Levey afterwards and had a little talk with him ...'



As a consequence of his bankruptcy, Clarke's personal library was put up for auction. The sale catalogue's cover announced: 'Saturday, August 8th, 1874, at eleven o'clock in the small hall, Melbourne Athenæum, opposite *Argus* Office, Collins Street East, the well-selected library of Mr Marcus Clarke, comprising many rare & choice works and scarce editions of English and French authors, and a most complete collection of colonial publications, almanacs, etc., and of all the notorious political and criminal trials.' The catalogue is reprinted in facsimile in McLaren's bibliography of Clarke.

It was a comprehensive library, and its loss to Clarke must have been considerable. Some 580 titles were listed. They included the complete works of Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, Marlowe, Wycherley, Congreve, Defoe, Swift, Sterne and Samuel Johnson. Dickens, Thackeray, Charles Reade and Douglas Jerrold are all represented by some ten or more titles each. There are novels by Samuel Richardson, Scott, Charles and Henry Kingsley, Bulwer Lytton, G. A. Lawrence, Wilkie Collins, Miss Braddon, Benjamin Disraeli, Ouida and Henty, and six volumes of *Tales from Blackwood's Magazine*. There are works by Edward Lear, G. A. Sala, Hood, Leigh Hunt, Burton, Walton, Kinglake, Carlyle, Isaac D'Israeli, Adam Smith, Buckle, John Stuart Mill, Boswell and Thomas Paine. Poetry includes collected editions of Pope, Wordsworth, Shelley, Burns, and Rossetti, and works of Byron, Browning, Tennyson, Kendall, Gordon and Brunton Stephens. American writers included Bret Harte, Hawthorne, Melville, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Longfellow, Twain and Artemus Ward.

French authors are represented by the forty volume collected edition of Balzac, sixteen volumes of Dumas, and collections of Camille Desmoulins, Boufflers, Molière, Montaigne and La Fontaine. Others include Victor Hugo, Rabelais, Béranger, de Musset, Rochefoucauld, Brillat Savarin, Chénier, de Nerval, Dumas fils, Gautier, Paul de Kock, George Sand, Eugene Sue, Voltaire and Renan. Other world literature represented includes Aristophanes, Pope's *Iliad*, Catullus, Virgil, Dante's *Inferno*, *Don Quixote*, Machiavelli, Luther, Goethe and Heine.

And there were bound sets of the *Colonial Monthly* (three volumes), *Humbug* (complete) and the *Australian Journal* (volume one). The catalogue concluded with a second section: 'Rare criminal trials and other scarce pamphlets, together with a unique collection of works relating to the early history of the Australian colonies'. The latter had been drawn on as source material for *Old Tales of a Young Country* and *His Natural Life*.

The sale realized £250.

The same day as the auction sale the Minute Book of the Library, Museum and National Gallery recorded 'that Mr Clarke be requested to place his resignation in the hands of the President'.



Bankruptcy seems not to have restrained Clarke in either his socializing or his journalism. He had written a theatrical advance notice in the *Herald*, 11 June: 'True to their instincts of monopoly, the parsimonious management of the Theatre Royal have secured the Opera House and will next week make an attempt to play the fag end of their dramatic company in opera bouffé. The piece they have decided to mutilate is *The Princess of Trebizonde*.' The manager of the company, Harwood, sued, claiming £500 damages.

Castieau recorded in his diary, 20 August: 'For some reason or other the theatres ceased to advertise in the *Herald* and then that paper began to get wonderfully moral and to pitch into Harwood and co. on the class of performances they were presenting to the public, stating it would appear as if the managers were encouraging a "social evil." Two sisters known as the Duvallis have been for some time engaged as dancers, one being dressed in male ballet costume. The criticism referred to them and to the Girards, the latter performers being young fellows who performed in a piece called *Legmania* and in which they threw their legs into very astonishing positions. One of the Girards burlesqued a female. Pictures of the Duvallis and the Girards were handed about the court during the trial which was not concluded on Saturday. Most of the theatrical people and the reporters were hanging about the court while it was going on.'

The Argus reported the case, 22 August 1874. It was heard by Sir Redmond Barry. G. P. Smith and Williams appeared for the plaintiff, George Higinbotham and Moles for the defendant.

In court Clarke refused to acknowledge authorship of his article: 'I know the writer of the first libel. I decline to tell you. If it was known that an opera was to be performed and that the performers could not play it, these remarks would be fair criticism. A man has a right to express his opinion and stand or fall by it. I heard of the performance before it took place. I also knew who were to play in the leading characters ... I have not seen the piece performed. I have seen "Legmania" and the Duvallis' performances. I don't think there is any harm in the performance itself but the substitution of that style of performance for the drama injures dramatic art and does not benefit the public. I think the expression "a social evil" means an evil in society and operating on society. It would be a social evil to have the drama destroyed by such performances as this dancing. The letter does not refer to the social evil of prostitution.

‘Cross-examined by Mr Smith: I decline to state whether I wrote the paragraph in the *Herald*. I did not write the article about the Great Monopolist. I decline to say who did. I don’t care to give information I may have acquired as to the writer of an article.

‘Mr Smith said there was no privilege to refuse to answer the question.

‘His Honour said the witness must answer.

‘Witness: I did write the paragraph about the *Princess of Trebizonde*. I did tell Harwood that I did not write it.

‘Mr Smith: Then you tell a lie to shield yourself when publicly taxed with being the writer.’

25 August *The Argus* reported Higinbotham’s defence of Clarke’s position: ‘Nor did it follow that because a man told a lie outside the court, in answer to a question that ought never to have been put, that he was therefore to be disbelieved when speaking on his oath in court. Writers in journals were bound sometimes by an express, always by an implied, engagement with their employers, not to make known the writers of anonymous articles, whether those articles were written by themselves or others. It was no part of the present inquiry to consider the advantages or disadvantages, merits or demerits, of anonymous writing. The fact remained that anonymous writing was the practice, and that there was an honourable obligation on the part of writers not to make known the authorship of articles contributed to the public newspapers. If, then, Mr Harwood knew this, he must have known that he was asking an improper and impertinent question. If he was ignorant that he was asking an impertinent question, of course he was to be excused. But whether he was ignorant or acquainted with the impertinence of his question, it should be remembered that the person to whom he addressed the inquiry was thereby placed in a difficult position. He owed a duty to his employers besides the professional duty he owed as a journalist. If, under these circumstances, a man says he is not the writer, it could hardly be termed, as Mr Smith termed it, a lie. He (Mr Higinbotham) did not ask the jury to decide this as a matter of casuistry, whether a man ought to give a denial under the circumstances, but he asked them to recollect the difficult position a man was placed in by such a question.’

Clarke’s remark on ‘social evil’ raised the issue of taboo sexuality. Harwood was grilled about the performance of the Duvallis sisters. 25 August *The Argus* reported him as saying: ‘I agree with Mr Keeley, Mr Bright, and Dr Neild as to the Duvallis. The pictures of the dancing are not correct. I think the postures are not ungraceful in a woman ballet dancing. The posture is not indecent in a ballet dancer.

‘Mr Higinbotham: Is the posture such as a modest woman should assume?

‘His Honour: I hardly think that is the right way of putting it. There are many modest women who would not assume that position if they could, and there are still more who could not if they would. The question is whether it is indecent for a woman to appear on the stage like that.

‘Mr Higinbotham said he would put the question in that form. What do you think of that posture, assuming the representation of it to be correct; is it a modest posture for a woman in a public theatre?

‘Witness: For a ballet dancer I think it is not immodest.

‘What do you think of the second picture?

‘It is very much distorted.

‘I don’t ask you that. Is it a modest attitude for a woman to assume?

‘There is nothing immodest about it in a ballet dancer.

‘Do they represent a graceful attitude for a woman on the stage?

‘There may be different opinions about that.

‘Look at them. You appear as if you were ashamed of them, you put them down so quickly.

‘I am not at all ashamed of them. Don’t imagine that for a moment.

‘Do you consider that a graceful attitude?

‘I never saw that attitude on the stage.

‘Assume that the picture is correct, would it be graceful in a woman on a public stage?

‘I see nothing immodest about it.

‘I didn’t ask you that. I ask you is the posture a graceful one?

‘I think Miss Duvallis was rather graceful.

‘I don’t ask you that. You won’t keep your eye on the question.

‘Mr Williams: Perhaps Mr Harwood will proceed to swallow the picture.

‘Mr Higinbotham: Is the posture depicted in that picture a graceful one for a woman?

‘Witness: I can’t associate the picture with the posture. I don’t think it is precisely a graceful posture.

‘Is it ungraceful?

‘I don’t think it ungraceful.

‘Does the picture depict a graceful attitude or not?

‘Well, it is not thoroughly graceful.

‘Is it the case that the gallery boys liked the postures of the Duvallis?

‘Not more than the other frequenters of the theatre. I believe all the frequenters of the theatre liked them. The leading journals always spoke highly of the performance. The public in London and Paris liked it.

‘Then it is because the public liked it that they were engaged?

‘They were engaged to supplement another performance. If we were playing one of Shakespeare’s pieces, of course we would not put them on the stage.

‘Then they please the public taste?

‘Judging by reports, they do.

‘Re-examined: I don’t put any performance on the stage unless I think the public would like it.’

Castieau recorded in his diary, 20 August: ‘Telo I heard was asked if the Duvallis’ performance was not enough to send excitable men away at once to a brothel.

“‘Well,” said Telo, “they never had such an effect upon me.”

“‘But supposing you were a young man from the country?”

“‘Well,” said Telo, “I must, to have had any such sensation, been a very long time up country.”

‘It came out in evidence that Marcus Clarke wrote the critique complained of and this must have been rather awkward for him as it appeared he had positively denied having done so to Harwood. *The Princess of Trebizonde* was said to have been put upon the stage in a mutilated

condition and in order that the jury might see what it was like it was put upon the boards again tonight. Ellis offered to get me a ticket for a party of ladies but I declined with thanks principally because I didn't care at being patronized or to be seen with ladies at a piece of doubtful character

...

'This case was concluded on Tuesday and a verdict for the plaintiff given. Damages one farthing on each count.'

¶

26 August 1874 *The Argus* reported: 'The verdict of the jury in the case of Harwood and others versus the publisher of the *Herald*, is one which will meet with general approval. It was an action in which little sympathy could be felt for either side. The adverse criticism which formed the subject of complaint ought never to have been published, and the proceedings founded upon it ought never to have been instituted. A total want of fairness was exhibited by the offending newspaper in prejudging an operative piece, and an equal want of judgment was displayed by the plaintiffs in setting in motion the costly and ponderous steam-hammer of the law to crack so small a nut.'

The Argus went on to criticize Clarke: 'We should be sorry to think that it was the logician and the moralist, and not the forensic pleader only, who complained of Mr G. P. Smith's question to Mr Marcus Clarke, "And you tell a lie to shield yourself when publicly taxed with being the writer?" For Mr Higinbotham, as an experienced barrister, must be well aware that circumstances may arise in which the anonymity of the press is put forward as the shield of a writer who cares very little for the etiquette, the usages, and the welfare and honour of the institution with which he has connected himself, and a great deal for his own personal interests, which might suffer if it were known that he was secretly traducing a friend or calumniating a benefactor. In the particular case before us, it was of considerable importance to the plaintiffs to ascertain and expose the motives of the writer of the alleged libel, with a view to ascertain if he had been actuated by a malicious feeling. Hence the propriety of the question, animadverted upon by Mr Higinbotham, but sanctioned and enforced by the court. For, though highly valuing the principle of anonymity to which the influence and esteem enjoyed by the press in all British communities is partly attributable, we cannot agree with the defendant's counsel that Mr Clarke was justified in telling a lie to screen his employers. In reality, however, he did not screen the publisher of the *Herald*. He merely sought to screen himself.'

Clarke responded with a letter to *The Argus*, 27 August: 'In your leading article of this morning you refer to and severely comment on my action in the case of Harwood v Fiegl. I beg your permission to say a few sentences in my own justification. It has been accepted that I said that a writer for a newspaper has a right to lie rather than admit the authorship of an anonymous article. I really said nothing of the kind. Your report of the circumstance is as follows: 'Witness: I did write the paragraph about the *Princess of Trebizonde*. I did tell Harwood that I did not write it.

‘Mr Smith: Then you tell a lie to shield yourself when publicly taxed with being the writer.

‘Witness: I should decidedly disavow being the author of any article published anonymously. The article after it is published is not mine and no one has a right to ask me about it. I have I think the right to deny the authorship of any article that appears anonymously in a newspaper. I maintain that such a denial is not a lie inasmuch as a lie – although in the abstract it may be taken to mean the utterance of anything which is not true – is held by both theologians and logicians to be the saying or doing of that which deceives another, when that other has a right to know the truth. That this definition is no quibble but a very necessary distinction made for very practical reasons is shown by the common experience of life. A man may lead a certain card at whist with the deliberate intention and desire to deceive but he is no liar. A man may conceal his track from a savage or intentionally divert a pursuer but he is not a liar although he commits an act with intent to mislead.

‘But there is yet another view of the case. The writer of your leading article says Mr Clarke did not screen the publisher of the *Herald*. He merely sought to screen himself. This is not so. I did not personally care one jot who knew that I wrote the paragraph in question but when the action for libel was commenced the proprietors of the *Herald* especially requested me (as indeed they have been good enough to admit) to take every possible care that the plaintiffs did not discover the names of the authors of the alleged libels. Your contributor says that a writer for the press is enabled to meet any inquiry which may be addressed to him as to the authorship of any particular contribution by the sufficient answer that he is bound alike by the general rules of the profession and by his particular obligations to the newspaper with which he is connected to maintain the anonymity of such contribution. I do not agree with this opinion and in this particular instance since any such answer would have been equivalent to an admission. In fact I was placed in a position where it became necessary for me either to state that which was not true or to betray a confidence to the manifest injury of the persons trusting me. I chose the former course and I would make that choice again. I may have committed a sin against morals by saying that which was not true but I humbly think that I should have committed a far greater sin had I betrayed a trust.

‘It may be deemed that I am offering excuses for myself. I do not desire to be held excused. I wish simply to give my reasons for my act. The censure which you have passed upon me is severe and I bow to it. There are occasions however when a man must be prepared to risk any censure – even that of so powerful a journal as yours – or do violence to his sense of right. I am simply convinced that I have done only and exactly that which an honourable person ought to have done and so long as I hold that opinion I rest satisfied with myself though every other person in the world should blame me.’

The Argus was unimpressed, commenting on Clarke’s letter in the same issue: ‘In a somewhat loftily worded paragraph, he assures us that he told this untruth solely in the interests of his employers, and that he is willing to bear any censure that may be passed upon him in consequence, because he feels that he was right in doing so. In other words, we are to regard Mr Marcus Clarke as a sort of martyr to his own exquisitely keen sense of honour. We are anxious to

put the best construction possible on Mr Clarke's conduct, but in making this statement we cannot help thinking that, like the player queen in *Hamlet*, he "doth protest too much" ... That Mr Clarke was not personally interested in denying the authorship of the libel, however, is not equally clear. Mr Clarke is a dramatic author, and had had dealings in that capacity with Mr Harwood. It is even conceivable that he might expect to have similar dealings with him again. Here, then, was one possible motive for concealing the truth. Mr Clarke and Mr Harwood, moreover, were on friendly terms, and it is just possible that Mr Clarke might not have cared to admit, and Mr Harwood might not have relished the confession, as to the true authorship of the libel. Of course Mr Clarke's hypersensitive appreciation of the true principles of honour may enable him to dispose of these little difficulties easily enough. But to the common intellect, we are afraid it will appear pretty evident that Mr Clarke had some slight personal interest in concealing the authorship of this now famous paragraph.'

The Argus may have been right about Clarke's motives for concealing his authorship from Harwood. And Harwood may have been aggrieved. Despite the success of the pantomime *Twinkle Twinkle Little Star* at the beginning of 1874, for the next five years no further work of Clarke's appeared on the Melbourne stage.



Kendall's twin brother Basil died in Sydney of tuberculosis, 21 January 1874. But Kendall himself had regained his health. He had begun a new life in the eighteen months he spent with the Fagans at Gosford. In the *Illustrated Sydney News*, 25 October 1890, A. G. Wise, 'Our Special Correspondent in the Kendall Country', gives Charles Fagan's recollection: 'Book in hand, said Mr Fagan, he wandered for hours here and in the gullies. He was an unskilful rider, being, like Carlyle, too often absorbed in reveries, and preferred walking. He was not, as a biographer has stated, employed to carry the mails between Gosford and Kincumber. My brother had the mail contract, and sometimes, for the sake of a change, Kendall used to jump on a horse and ride to Kincumber, about nine miles away. The road is very pretty to Green Point, and thence across country to Broadwater Lagoon. He wrote his poems on any scrap of paper or old note-book, jotting down odd lines and words, to write the poem as a whole with scarcely an alteration. He always wrote with his left hand, owing to an accident in his youth, forming each letter separately.'

In *Henry Kendall: His Later Years* Frederick Kendall recalls Joseph Fagan's description of his father: 'He was a good swimmer. He could ride a horse well and would be up with the best of us when yarding a fractious mob of cattle and was a good judge of a horse and knew the pedigree of every horse racing at Randwick.' It is a different picture of Kendall from his Melbourne years.

Kendall kept his whereabouts hidden from Charlotte and his family. But he was in touch with others. In the introduction to his selection of Kendall's writings, Ackland quotes Kendall's appraisal of a manuscript of Holdsworth's, 16 June, 1874: 'If I did not know you, I should have taken you to be an intellectual eunuch.' He offered detailed comments on a manuscript

Holdsworth had sent: 'So ends the butchering business. If I don't suit you, why – hang it – get another butcher.' The poet P. J. Holdsworth, visiting relatives at Brisbane Water around the middle of 1874, had encountered Kendall and they began to correspond. But Kendall was determined to distance his Bohemian past. In 'The Metamorphoses of Henry Kendall', *Southerly*, 1981, H. P. Heseltine quotes a letter Kendall wrote to Holdsworth, 4 September 1874: 'I haven't a scrap left of my Bohemian writings,' and another to Thomas Butler, the editor of *The Freeman's Journal*, 20 March 1875: 'I would rather turn bullock driver than go back to the ragged old Bohemian life.'

J. Sheridan Moore, who had been declared bankrupt in 1873 with debts of over £1000, also resumed correspondence. W. H. Wilde quotes a letter of 23 October 1874 Kendall wrote to Moore: 'I have taken nothing stronger than tea for the last eleven months ... Nothing shall tempt me to write for money again; and the life I have chosen precludes me from writing for pleasure.'

And Kendall was in touch with Margaretta Stenhouse, the widow of Nicol Stenhouse, his early patron. At her request in August 1874 he wrote an 'In Memoriam' for her daughter Alice, sending a revised version incorporating some of her suggestions, 9 September. She gave him a copy of the Bible. Kendall wrote to Moore, 19 November 1874: 'Mrs Stenhouse has just presented me with a Bible. Poor lady – she wants me to swallow the dogma asserting its plenary inspiration. I cannot see it. Setting aside the grand poetry of the "prophets," the magnificent myth of Elijah, the fine oriental wisdom of the Proverbs, and the sublime code of ethics laid down in the Gospels, it is about the most disappointing book I have ever read.' Much annotated by Kendall, it is preserved in the National Library of Australia.

In the same letter he told Moore: 'You are mistaken when you say that my resolution not to enter the domain of letters again is an offshoot of the "egotism of despair." It is no such thing; but is, most probably, the issue of laziness. The fact is I hate the sight of a pen. I may, from time to time scribble off a squib or prose trifle; but, as to more serious work – bah! I had quite enough of it during the weary years between 1869 and 74. Still, I will always sympathize with movements on behalf of Australian Literature – with your efforts, especially.'

'Why should I bother and work out my brains for a shadow? Did Harpur acquire a reputation by his writings? Did Michael and Gordon, with all their belief in themselves? If they failed what right have I to expect success? And what, after all, is success of the kind worth? Nothing. Give me the bovine life and let the Gods go hang!'

Nonetheless, from 1873 Kendall had been appearing regularly in the *Town and Country Journal* with a 'squib or prose trifle' – poems, recollections, and satirical verses on politics and current events, much of it anonymous. The *Town and Country Journal*, a thirty-two page weekly, price sixpence, had been established in Sydney in 1870 by Samuel Bennett, father of Kendall's one-time beloved Rose. It was in direct competition with *The Sydney Mail*, the weekly companion to the *Sydney Morning Herald*. The *Town and Country Journal* had from its inception provided a regular outlet for local writers and writing. It was well-known for its serial fiction, which included Rolf Boldrewood's early novels and Charles Dickens' *Edwin Drood*.



As a consequence of his bankruptcy, 7 September Clarke submitted letters of resignation to the Chairman of the Library committee and to the chief librarian, Henry Sheffield.

He was not alone in having financial problems. Johnson writes of the Yorick: 'In 1874 the Club had a disagreement with Miss Oliver, who had taken over as landlady at 74 Collins Street East, and sought new premises, settling on 78 Collins Street West, formerly the residence of Edward Wilson ... To help with finances, it was decided to facilitate the re-entry of former or lapsed members to the Club. In September 1874, nine of these were submitted to ballot, including foundation members Clarke, Bleasdale, Telo and Walstab. Only Clarke was blackballed.'

The *Australian Journal* was also in difficulties. Ronald Campbell recorded seventy-five years later: 'In 1874, almost a decade after it had been founded, the *Australian Journal* was dying on its feet. A letter was sent to newsagents and other retailers, attributing the malady to the competition of English magazines, and asking whether it would be advisable to reduce the price from a shilling to sixpence. The agents were evidently in favour of the reduction, which began with the September issue. September, 1874, therefore, is an important date in the *Journal*'s history, as, once reduced, the price has remained unchanged regardless of wars and economic upheavals. In the same month it was announced that Robert P. Whitworth had been appointed editor.'

Born in England in 1831, Whitworth had been an explorer in New Zealand, an actor, playwright, novelist, proprietor and editor of *Town Talk*, and writer for *Punch*, *The Age*, and *The Argus*, on which he had known Clarke since 1867: 'It was here that I had first the honour and pleasure of his close association and friendship – a friendship which, I am proud to say, existed ever after up to the very day of his death,' he wrote in his Preface to Clarke's *The Mystery of Major Molineux*. As for the *Journal*'s very first editor, Walstab, he sought out employment in the Land's Department in 1874, not returning to journalism until 1880.

September 1874 the revived *Australian Journal* under Whitworth, as well as dropping its price, introduced regular dramatic criticism, and began a new serial by Clarke, *Chidiack Tichbourne, or the Babington Conspiracy. An historical romance of the days of Queen Elizabeth*. *Chidiack Tichbourne* ran until April 1875, but unlike Clarke's two previous serials, did not find immediate book publication. It was not until 1893 that it was published, by Eden, Remington & Co. in London. Clarke and Robert Whitworth collaborated on a dramatic version, *Charnock Chase*, but it was never produced. Whitworth's editorship of the *Australian Journal* lasted a year, and he serialized two of his own novels, *Hine-ra, or the Maori Scout* and *Mary Summers*. Campbell comments: 'He does not seem to have stopped the decline in circulation.' Clarke's copy of *Round the Camp Fire* by Whitworth was one of the books sold in the auction of his library.

In *His Natural Life* Clarke had based John Rex's imposture on the contemporary Tichborne case, in which Arthur Orton, a butcher from Wagga Wagga, claimed to be the missing English heir Roger Tichborne. With *Chidiack Tichbourne* Clarke was clearly exploiting the notoriety of the name, though it is an historical novel about another real life Tichbourne's participation in the Babington Roman Catholic conspiracy to set Mary, Queen of Scots on the English throne.

McLaren quotes Henry Gyles Turner's negative annotation to his copy of *Chidiack Tichbourne*, now in the State Library of Victoria: 'This story will not add to the reputation of Marcus Clarke. It is ludicrously extravagant and immature, and wanting in coherence and construction. Walter Gerrard is an uninteresting sneak, and Hum an impossible swashbuckler. The pages are saturated with Blood and Beer, so as to drown all interest in the story in disgust. The love passages are feeble and as artificial as waxworks – while the whole story is a meretricious jumble of improbabilities. It is a mixture of Sir Walter Scott and G. P. R. James at their very worst and might have been written as a satirical skit upon the school of historical romance.'

A jolly historical romp, the novel makes early use of that classic line of spymaster to agent when Sir Francis Walsingham tells Walter Gerrard 'I do not pay you to think'. Gerrard is a government agent, tracking down Jesuits. His name and his quarry suggest that Clarke was at some level thinking of his former school friend now become a Jesuit, Gerard Manley Hopkins. Gerard, indeed, had an interest in the contemporary Tichborne trial himself, writing about it to his mother, and in 1873 attending and enjoying Lord Chief Justice Cockburn's summing up.



Clarke was now upsetting J. E. Neild. In a piece on doctors in his 'Wicked World' series in the *Weekly Times*, 24 January 1874, Clarke had characterized him as 'Cornelius Agrippa, the only medical man who has a distinct position in literature ... you may meet him anywhere, but more especially behind the scenes of the theatre ... When that most charming woman Miss Maggie Pie wanted to make a hit in Fawkner's Town, she said to Jonathan O. Jamm, "How am I to do it?" and Jonathan said, winking his most wicked and experienced eye the while, "Call upon Cornelius Agrippa, and consult him about your chest." Agrippa is the most impressionable of men, and despite his affectation of ferocity, would not hurt a fly – much less a beautiful woman. Miss Maggie Pie went, and saw, and – well, received well-deserved praise for her very excellent performances.'

Neild especially admired the young actress Hattie Shepparde, an anagram of whose name he adopted as his new pseudonym, Tahite. Elliott records that when she died, Smith arranged for a number of young actresses to act as pall-bearers at her funeral. It became a celebrity event and the crowd it attracted got out of control. Neild complained in a letter to *The Argus*: 'They pushed, and hustled, and elbowed, and truculently blocked up the passage to the grave so resolutely that I had literally to fight my way to it ...' Clarke in the *Herald*, 25 September 1874, called the episode 'a theatrical display, at once expensive and pretentious. The solemn mockery of spirited horses which are not spirited, of magnificent coaches lined with musty cloth, or worm-eaten plumes, and costly housing of cotton velvet, must be hired to entertain the dirty little boys of Carlton. The vain and foolish persons who "organized" the ghastly mummary ... are alone to blame.' 27 September 1874 Neild wrote to Clarke about this report: 'It served you as another occasion for gratifying the dislike which for reasons that I can guess well enough you entertain towards me. I have not

hitherto resented these attacks though I have had good reason to do so. You charged me indirectly with the basest venality some months ago in one of the papers you wrote in the *Weekly Times*. I let that pass, for I was desirous of avoiding unpleasantness. But I give you fair notice now, that as you desire war, it shall be war.' After Clarke took another swipe at Neild in *The Brisbane Courier*, 25 November, Neild responded, 1 December: 'You are not wise to make these additions to the sum or your offences against me. I never *fail to balance these unpleasant accounts, because I can afford to wait until the time comes*. As over your head there is more than one hair-suspended sword, common prudence ought to suggest the wisdom of not adding to them. You cannot do me any harm by these attacks, but you will hurt yourself a good deal; therefore if you will take my advice you will let me alone. It is the old story of the viper and the file.'

30 December 1874 Castieau rejoined the Yorick after a six months absence: 'In the evening I started for the Athenæum and on the way there met Wheeler, one of the reporters for *Hansard*. As we passed the Yorick club some of the members saw me from the window and beckoned me to come to them. I went and was demonstratively received by McKinley, Keiley, Harrison, Duerdin, Short and others. The club is now in much better premises than of old and I was somewhat taken aback with the number of rooms and the great accommodation. The place is not at all Bohemian in appearance and possesses a billiard room and a drawing room. I have long had an inclination to be again a member of the Yorick and tonight I was so heartily welcomed that I could not withstand the temptation of joining and so paid my subscription for the first half of 1875. Went to the Athenæum and got a book.'

Back in England Richard Horne had at last received some official recognition and financial security when in June 1874 Disraeli provided him with a pension of £50 a year, increased to £100 in 1880.



George Robertson now found a publisher for an English edition of *His Natural Life*. As his agent Robertson had employed the London office of F. F. Baillière, the Paris based publisher who had expanded to London and, in 1860, to Melbourne. Baillière's approached Richard Bentley and Son, the publisher of, amongst others, Wilkie Collins, Charles Dickens, Isaac and Benjamin Disraeli, Thomas Moore and Mrs Henry Wood. Richard Bentley, who died in 1871, had established the company in 1829; his son George managed the business from 1867 until his death in 1895. *The Archives of Richard Bentley and Son, 1829–98* were published on microfilm in 1976 and preserve some of the details of publication, which Ian McLaren discusses in 'Richard Bentley and the publication of *His Natural Life*'.

Bentley's sent the novel out to two readers, Lady Charlotte Jackson and Geraldine Jewsbury, whose reports are preserved in the Bentley archives in the British Library. 11 September Charlotte Jackson reported; 'It is a story of crime, and of sickening horrors which the mind the mind instinctively refuses to give credence to ... If this vile system is now utterly abolished, for no "transportation beyond seas" I believe takes place now, it seems scarcely worth while to give

an exaggerated picture of it for the delectation of the readers of sensational novels ... The coincidences it contains are too numerous to appear probable, and stamp it in my opinion as a work of pure fiction – though there may be a few grains of truth to be gleaned from it.’ 22 September 1874 Geraldine Jewsbury recommended publication: ‘an extremely powerful and well written work, and you will do well to accept it subject to one condition which I think essential. The story is so painful that if it ends miserably the reader will not easily shake off the impression, and the *real* pain it will cause to a reader would act against its success.

‘The author need not alter anything – the last scene, a cyclone which swallows up the returning ship and all the souls it contains, is a powerful description – but another chapter must be added – ten or twelve pages would do it.

‘There need not be any detail of rescue, but in the final chapter the unfortunate hero must be shown as saved and returned home and as having taken his proper place in the world, and also as devoting the remainder of his life to getting Norfolk Island abolished ... The whole story is to show what transportation used to be – and what Norfolk Island was. If it were softened off at the end and some vista of life and comfort were opened I think this book would produce a great effect

‘It will require revision, because though the author knows many things, he does not understand that the son of a City knight does not take his father’s title; – nor that the daughter of a commoner who marries a knight, is not called “Lady Eleanor,” and mistakes of that kind. The style and language are however good.’

In *XIX Century Fiction: A Bibliographical Record* Michael Sadleir printed a letter Clarke wrote to Bentley’s, 30 December 1874, responding to the news that they ‘would publish my novel *His Natural Life*, and secure me the copyright, provided that certain alteration was made in the end of the story.

‘Mr Skerry informs me that it is your wish that the book ends happily, and suggests to me to correct the sheets accordingly. I have by this mail forwarded to Mr Skerry the last pages of the novel altered as he desires, and concluding with an additional chapter putting that pleasant construction upon events which I believe you think to be best suited to your purchasers.

‘The story – if you will recall – originally ended in the death of the hero and the death of the woman whom he loves. Mr Skerry informs me that you object to that end. It would be monstrous to make the hero – a convict – *marry* his love, so I have given the woman a daughter and contrived that the hero shall rescue that daughter from death and see in her the mother whom he once loved.

‘As I have informed Mr Skerry by this mail, I desire *that the correction which I send shall be the only correction in the novel*. Unless you can see your way to publish *His Natural Life* as I have written it (replacing the original end by the MS sent to Mr Skerry) and retaining the appendices etc. I would rather not have it republished at all. I hope however that the MS and this letter may arrive in time to prevent any correction by a strange hand.

‘Mr Skerry gives me – through Mr Baillièrre – to understand, that you give no price for the book, but publish an edition at your own cost, securing to *me* the copyright of future editions. I shall be glad to have a reply from you to this note.’

When the Bentley edition appeared, the ending from Robertson's 1874 edition had been retained. But the detailed subeditorial corrections were extensive, involving issues of taste and propriety as well as punctuation, tense, spelling and grammar. Lurline Stuart notes in her Academy edition of the novel that 'computer collation reveals some three-and-a-half thousand variants'.



The Minute Book of the Melbourne Public Library records a meeting of the trustees, 1 December 1874: 'To consider and order on the sub-librarian's letter of 18 November 1874 asking permission (at the request of the Minister of Public Instruction) to write a school History of the Settlement of the Australian Colonies. It was resolved that the request be granted.' 21 December Clarke outlined a proposal for the project to the Department of Education, now in the Public Record Office.

Perhaps Clarke undertook the commission in an attempt to restore his finances. 13 January 1875 his bankruptcy affidavit showed debts of £2816 6s. 6d., assets £505, deficiency £1681 6s. 6d.

19 February 1875 the Minute Book records: 'The President, with letter from Mr Marcus Clarke informing the Trustees that he had received an unconditional certificate in his insolvency; also a letter from Mr Curtayne forwarded by Mr Clarke. The letters were read and it was resolved: That the resignation of Mr Clarke, placed in the hands of the President by resolution of 7th of August be returned to him.'

He had kept his job. He was discharged from bankruptcy on 27 February 1875. Elliott records that his creditors ultimately received something less than seven shillings in the pound.

In 1875 Sir Andrew Clarke left the governorship of the Straits Settlements for a position on the Council of the Viceroy of India. Clarke wrote to Duffy, 10 April 1875: 'I suppose you know that my cousin Andrew Clarke, after generally slaughtering pirates in the Malay Peninsula, has been named Minister of Public Works in India at £9,600 a year. Lucky fellow he is, to be sure. I would take his work for half the money, and sustain the dignity as royally as in me lies.'

22 April *The Argus* reported on the Eight Hour day anniversary celebration at the Theatre Royal. Dampier read an address written by Marcus Clarke. Regulation of the length of the working day was a demand of nineteenth-century radicals and trade unionists in Britain, America and Australia. Working days of twelve or sixteen hours were common. The first eight hour day agreement in the world was reached by the stonemasons of Melbourne, 21 April 1856. But its extension to other trades was only gradual. Iron workers and shipwrights in Australia achieved the eight hour day in 1872, and the unions continued to press for its extension. For someone of Clarke's background, participation in the anniversary celebration marks a significant step. Though at this time, upper-class conservatives were often more sympathetic to the working classes than were many middle-class free-marketers. Campbell says that Massina's *Australian Journal* was a strong advocate of the movement.

9 June *The Argus* reported: 'Mr McKean called the attention of the Minister of Public Instruction to the appointment of Mr Marcus Clarke to compile a *History of Australia* for use in Victorian schools and asked him whether Mr Clark was appointed without the matter having been submitted to competition. The hon. member said he had been informed that Mr Clarke who occupied the position of sub-librarian in the public library had been employed to compile a history of the colony the terms being that he should receive a sum of £200 retain the copyright and sell the Government so many copies of the work at a certain price. There were in Melbourne a number of literary gentlemen of position and experience who would have been only too willing to have availed themselves of the opportunity of compiling such a history and who would have done it probably at a less cost. He referred to men who had had high university honour conferred upon them. Mr Richard Birnie and Mr Badham were both Masters of Arts. But the Minister of Education had preferred a man who for abusive and scurrilous writing had been kicked off the Melbourne press. He was so abusive in fact that his writings were refused by some portion of the press ...

'Mr Langton submitted that it was breach of privilege to make an attack upon gentleman when no one could rise to say a word in his defence.

'The Speaker: I must say I think the hon. member is going too far.

'Mr McKean: I want to show that the Government has employed a man who was indebted some hundreds or thousands of pounds.

'The Speaker said he could not allow remarks of this kind.

'Mr McKean would then take an opportunity of showing the character of this Mr Marcus Clarke irrespective of his being an insolvent and not paying 1d. in the £. His whole career was such that the Minister of Education had no right to make such an arrangement with him as the one he had made or was about to make.

'Mr Mackay replied that the hon. member had been misled in this matter. In a case of this kind character he admitted was an important consideration. No matter what were the qualifications of the person employed character was indispensable. He did not know of any gentleman in the colony who had higher qualifications for the writing of such a work than Mr Clarke. (Oh!) This gentleman had written several works of fiction which displayed great industry in the combining of facts describing scenery and collating records of the past. He was therefore well fitted to write a work of the kind entrusted to him. He (Mr Mackay) had no intention of defending Mr Clarke against all that was said of him and no doubt all men and all literary men had faults. Nor did he say there were not other gentlemen in the country who could write the book as well as Mr Clarke. In point of fact the engagement did not originate with him but with his predecessor in office Mr Stephen. The terms were that Mr Clarke would compile an octavo volume of 300 pages according to certain approved forms for the sum of 150 pounds the Government to take 2,000 copies at 2s. 6d. each. That he thought very moderate payment. The book was to be a history of the Australian colonies since the foundation of New South Wales, to be written subject to the approval of the Minister. The agreement was that if the Government wanted more copies than the 2000 they

should take more at the same rate and if they did not take any more they had got the copyright for their own use.’



27 February and 6 March 1875, the *Town and Country Journal* published ‘Arcadia at our gates’, Kendall’s commemoration of the district where he was now living: ‘About six miles to the west or southwest of Narrara lies the darkly magnificent valley of Mooni Mooni. Shut in by immense beetling hills from half the morning, hiding an April in the hottest days of December, and cooling the eye with a blessing of brooks when the tops of the ridges are dead for want of rain, this beautiful Goshen is still left to those primitive types, the sawyer and shingle-splitter – and to a few of these only.’ Amidst his celebration of the natural beauty, he did not neglect to describe the slaughter of the Aboriginal inhabitants of the region. The district continued to provide him with material over the years. The *Town and Country Journal* published a prose piece ‘Overland from Gosford to Sydney by Tiresias’ on 20 April 1878, and the poems ‘Mooni (written in the shadow of 1872)’ on 11 December 1875 and ‘Names upon a Stone’ (inscribed to G. L. Fagan Esq.) on 2 March 1878. ‘Narrara Creek’, written in 1874, appeared in *Sydney Once a Week*, 18 May 1878.

19 May he wrote to Moore: ‘I write to you chiefly to beg that you will not divulge my whereabouts to any one of my relatives. I don’t want to have anything to do with either the Rutter or the Kendall mob. I am as tired of one family as I am of the other.

‘I have to thank you for your kind effort to obtain literary work for me; and to say that such kindness is only natural to you. But I do not need employment of the kind – I can do without it. Literature has been so long my crutch that I don’t think I shall ever use it as a walking stick. If my relatives leave me alone, things will run smoothly enough.

‘When I saw you last, I had for the first time during the last nineteen months take a glass or two too much. Since then I have not touched anything stronger than water.’

A. G. Wise records in ‘Round and About Gosford’ that Charles Fagan wrote to Kendall with a request, 29 June 1875, ‘to frame petitions for a road from Gosford to Narara Ferry, and for an annual grant for the repairs required on the Gosford to Possum Creek Road. Kendall endorsed the note as follows: This is from Mr Fagan, the magistrate with whom I lived at Gosford. The Joe and William he mentions are his brothers. They are all noble fellows. It was I who brought about the establishment of a post office here (i.e., at Gosford). I also wrote the petitions which led to the deepening of Brisbane Water, and two annual grants for the roads. Before I left Gosford the inhabitants presented me with a watch, etc. I only mention these facts to show that I must have been behaving myself properly while I was in the specified district.’



21 April 1875 Clarke wrote a letter to Bentley’s, printed in Sadleir’s *XIX Century Fiction*: ‘This letter will be enclosed to you by Mr George Robertson the Melbourne publisher of my novel *His Natural Life*.

‘Mr Skerry writes to say that you expressed yourself willing to print the work for library circulation in England in the customary three vols. On the following terms:

‘£50 on publication

‘£50 on sale of 750 copies

‘£50 for every other 250 copies sold

‘But that this offer being contingent upon the fact that Mr Robertson send *no* copies for sale in England.

‘I was ignorant of the condition and asked Mr Robertson to send home some copies for review. He sent home 250 which did not sell (one vol. 8vo. 488 pages 7/6d.) nor did any English journal review the work. Mr Robertson will, however, withdraw the copies from the market if you will publish the book.

‘Will you oblige me by making terms with his London agent and bring out the book? I have authorized Mr Robertson to do the best he can with the book, and to receive any money paid for its republication.

‘Sir Charles Gavan Duffy, writes me by the mail to say that he had – through Mrs Cashel Hoey – communicated with you. I have written to him to tell him the arrangement I have made with Mr Robertson, and to ask him to see you himself.’

Duffy, who was visiting Europe, arranged for the proofs to be read by Frances Cashel Hoey. She may also have been responsible for some of the stylistic changes made in the English edition from Clarke’s original. P. D. Edwards in ‘The English Publication of *His Natural Life*’, quotes an undated letter of hers from the Bentley archives in the University of Illinois Library that indicates her feelings: ‘What a horrid, powerful, clever, raw book his is! What admirable narrative, and ludicrously bad dialogue! What forcible language, and creaky grammar.’

In June 1875 Gresley Lukin’s *Brisbane Courier* and *Queenslander* both began serializing *His Natural Life*. They used the shorter, revised text that Robertson had published in book form, and it ran until February 1876. Attached to each episode a note announced that the copyright of *His Natural Life* had been purchased by the proprietors of the papers from Clarke. In “‘Curse the Law!’” Catherine Bond notes that ‘copyright would have subsisted in the 1874 George Robertson first edition of the book version of *His Natural Life*, pursuant to s. 14 of the Victorian Copyright Act 1869. However, this copyright had a significant limitation: just as for the serial version, copyright in the book only applied in the colony of Victoria. Beyond the boundaries of that colony, any individual or publisher could reproduce *His Natural Life* without permission or payment. Thus, the editors of *The Queenslander*, when that paper published the 1874 edition of *His Natural Life* in serial form, were under no legal obligation to either pay Clarke or purchase any copyright.’ Lukin, however, had clearly agreed to pay Clarke.

In ‘Richard Bentley and the publication of *His Natural Life*’ McLaren establishes from Bentley’s ledger that 16 September 1875 *His Natural Life* was published in a three volume edition of 750 copies retailing at £1 11s. 6d. Four hundred and five copies of the edition were sold to ‘town’, mainly circulating library sales, 62 to country, 16 for cash, while 41 copies were used

for presentation and review; 206 were remaindered in March 1877 for £7 14s. 6d. – an average price of ninepence each.

Clarke wrote to Duffy in London, 30 November 1875: ‘Very many thanks for all the trouble you have been at on my account. It is rare indeed to find anyone who will really “work” for a man who wants help. I hope that it may one day be my good fortune to aid *you* in something which you want done. I have received from London the *Natural Life* in three vols, and have written to thank Mrs Hoey; I have told her that she is a “brick” – the only word in the English tongue which cannot be applied to any person having a hint of selfishness in them.’

The Argus reported, 13 January 1876: ‘Mr Marcus Clarke’s novel relating to the bygone horrors of the transportation system, *His Natural Life*, which has been republished in London by Messrs Bentley, has been largely noticed by the London press. The majority of the reviewers seem to think that the subject is one almost too sad to be made the basis of a romance, and the *Saturday Review* condemns it on this ground. *The World*, the *Spectator*, the *Graphic*, the *Morning Post*, the *Athenæum*, and *Vanity Fair*, however, all speak in high terms of the realistic power of the book.’

H. M. Hyndman, who had met Clarke at the Melbourne Club and reviewed his first novel, wrote of *His Natural Life* in his memoirs: ‘This is an awful book. Someone speaking of it the other day said it was a mere reproduction of official records. This is quite unfair in every way. The novel is in its line a masterpiece of horror. It is not mere photography: it is an artistic presentation of events so terrible in themselves that it needed a craftsman of much more than ordinary skill and imagination to bring them within the scope of literary art at all. The story is based upon incidents many of which actually took place in those hells upon earth Van Diemen’s Land and Norfolk Island. So hideous were the details ... that I believe the original records were deliberately destroyed, as being contrary to public morals that such things should ever see the light. But Clarke’s tremendous book remains, telling, alike by what it recites and what it suppresses, the frightful truth. I defy anyone to read it through without feeling as he lays it down that he has been perusing what is not far, if at all, removed from a work of genius. This is the more remarkable inasmuch that Clarke’s turn seemed to be towards light and witty comment on the topics of the day. *His Natural Life* shows that, as I suspected, much greater power than he himself knew lay below the surface of his ability. He never did himself full justice. But this novel of his will live by sheer force of its terror-inspiring delineations long after his other work is forgotten.’

¶

18 August 1875 *The Argus* reported: ‘All playgoers will receive with profound regret the announcement of the sudden death of Mr John Dunn, the well-known actor, who for so many years occupied a prominent position on the Melbourne stage. Mr Dunn was to have played last night at the Opera House, and he was on his way down to the theatre, about a quarter to 10 o’clock, when he was seized with a fit, and dropped down in the street. He was turning the corner

of Lygon and Queensberry Streets, when he was observed to stagger and fall. Two young men who were passing ran to his assistance, but he was only able to ejaculate his name before he became insensible. They tried to recover him by applying cold water to his head, but finding their efforts to be of no avail, they without loss of time conveyed him to the Melbourne Hospital in a cab. He must have died very quickly, for when examined by Dr Annand, he was found to be dead. The cause of death was either apoplexy or disease of the heart. An inquest will be held.

‘John Dunn was the oldest actor on the Australian stage, and might well be termed a veteran in the profession. Not of him, however, could it be said, “superfluous lags the veteran on the stage,” for his appearance before the footlights was always welcome. He gained his experience on both sides of the world. Over 40 years ago he was regarded as an actor of repute on the English stage. He was the second Jim Crow, and rivalled Rice, the original impersonator of that once extremely popular character. He was also very clever in his delineation of negro characters, which at that time – before the advent of Ethiopian serenaders – were new in England. By his successes in that direction he achieved a fortune, only to lose it in the quicksands of the management of a London theatre – we believe the City Theatre, in Bishopsgate Street. It may be mentioned that he delighted continental audiences with his Jim Crow. After his unfortunate venture in management he visited America, and played there with considerable success. In the year 1857, he was induced to visit these colonies, then in the heyday of prosperity from the enormous yield of gold, and he came over from California. He appeared at the old Theatre Royal in *Jim Crow* and *That Rascal, Jack*. He was not long in securing himself a good position on the stage here, and he established himself as a popular favourite. It would be needless to recite the various parts in which he appeared successfully, for all playgoers will be well acquainted with them. Suffice it to say that he excelled in burlesque and in eccentric comedy, and that in John Dunn we lose a low comedian whose place will not be easily filled. He played all through the Australian colonies, and could count many friends wherever he went. About five years ago he visited America, but the time was unpropitious, and the trip was not a remunerative one. He returned to Australia without crossing over to England, and was re-engaged when the new Theatre Royal – the present building – was opened. Since that time his connexion with the theatre was unbroken. He may truly be said, to have died in harness.

‘Mr Dunn was about 68 years of age, and was remarkably hale for his years. He leaves a wife and four children – two sons and two daughters. One son is following his father’s profession, and is now in Sydney; the other is in the Bank of New South Wales in this colony. His daughters are both married – one to Mr L. L. Lewis, the other to Mr Marcus Clarke. Mr Dunn’s proper name was, we believe, O’Donoghue, Dunn being merely the stage pseudonym; but the latter name was the one he was always known by. He came from a very respectable Irish family, and, like all Irishmen, claimed to be descended from the ancient Irish kings. His genial, hearty manner, rendered him a universal favourite, and his death will be generally regretted.’

20 August *The Argus* reported: ‘The funeral of the late Mr John Dunn took place yesterday at the Melbourne Cemetery. There was a large muster of the theatrical profession, Freemasons, and private friends of the deceased. Several private carriages followed behind the mourning coaches.

The pall-bearers were Mr Arthur Dunn, of the Bank of New South Wales, the second son of the deceased; Mr Marcus Clarke, his son-in-law; Mr H. G. Turner, manager of the Commercial Bank; Mr Richard Stewart; Mr H. Harwood, Mr John Hennings, and Mr Stuart O'Brien, of the Theatre Royal; Mr Lazar, of the Adelaide Theatre; Mr Wheatleigh; Mr Williamson, from the Opera House; and Mr Chapman, the well-known musical publisher. The funeral service of the Latin Church was read by Father O'Sullivan, but the deceased was buried in that portion of the cemetery set apart for members of the Church of England, to which communion his widow and children belong.' Arthur Patchett Martin records in *Temple Bar* that Dunn's tombstone was inscribed with Hamlet's epigraph on Yorick: 'He was a fellow of infinite jest.'

Mackinnon writes of Clarke's 'deep and sincere affection' for his father-in-law: 'the bitterness of the loss was greatly aggravated by his inability to publish the autobiography of the deceased actor, which most interesting autobiography he had, together with Dr Neild, revised, at the author's request, with a view to its publication after his death. But the wish of the deceased was not carried out. * * * * * Accordingly, the autobiography of Australia's clever comedian was not brought out, and the early history of the Australian stage has been lost to the public.' The six asterisks mark an excision in the text of the *Memorial Volume*. Apparently Rose and her husband objected to the publication of the biography, and to any mention of their objection in Mackinnon's memoir.



After breaking with the *Argus* group, Clarke maintained a regular connexion with Gresley Lukin's *Brisbane Courier*, and its associated weekly, *The Queenslander*. 21 August 1875 he began his column 'Country Leisure', suitably adorned with quotations from Horace, in both papers: 'My retreat is a very humble one, and – so far as I have at present constructed it – consists but of one room. That room, however, is filled with the best companions in the world. Poets, sages, dramatists, meet me there whenever I make a party of pleasure, and hold with me the most delightful conversations. It is not every day, however, that I can escape to the pleasant fields and green meadows in which my little estate is situated. Like Horace, I have my duty in the city ... Other folks' business jumps up about me on all sides – "Remember, you are a witness in the trespass case, your solicitors want to see you about your friend's dishonoured acceptance – try and get this poem into the *Polynesian*." If I say that I will do my best, the poetaster cries "That's all nonsense, my dear fellow, you can if you like you know!" But in the country one has no such troubles.'

Nonetheless, it was with poets that he dealt in his second 'Country Leisure' column, 4 September 1875. It is Clarke's fullest engagement with his poetic contemporaries. And it contains his first proclamation of the establishment of a national school of Australian poetry: 'If I do not much mistake, Australia will have a school of poetry peculiarly her own. In historic Europe, where every rood of ground is hallowed in legend and in song, the least imaginative can find food for sad and sweet reflection. When strolling at noon down an English country lane, looking at

sunset by some ruined chapel on the margin of an Irish lake, or watching the mists of morning unveil Ben Lomond, we feel all the charm which springs from association with the past. Soothed, saddened, and cheered by turns, we partake the varied moods which belong not so much to ourselves as to the dead men who in old days sung, suffered, or conquered in the scenes which we survey. But this our native or adopted land has no past, no story. No poet speaks to us. Do we need a poet to interpret Nature's teachings, we must look into our own hearts, if perchance we may find a poet there.

'What is the dominant note of Australian scenery? That which is the dominant note of Edgar Allan Poe's poetry. Weird Melancholy. A poem like "L'Allegro" could never be written by an Australian. It is too airy, too sweet, too freshly happy. An Australian might readily write in the strain of "Ulalume," "The Raven," or "The Fall of the House of Usher." Australians have written "The Four Graves." "Our Hope." "The Sick Stockrider" and "Ghost Glen." Undoubtedly the chief of those who have attempted to climb the shining heights is Henry Kendall, of Sydney, the author of the poem last named. He has caught clearly the wild and grotesque spirit of his native forest.'

Beginning with "In historic Europe" and ending with "too freshly happy" the passage was recycled into the preface Clarke contributed to Gordon's poems the following year. Then, after the tribute to Kendall, Clarke recycled a paragraph originally published as part of the text to the monthly series *Pictures in the National Gallery Melbourne* in September 1874, and collected in book form in 1875. The paragraph was part of a description of Nicholas Chevalier's *The Buffalo Ranges*. Chevalier, born in St Petersburg in 1828, came to Australia in 1855, where he became a popular cartoonist for the Melbourne *Punch*, and introduced chromolithography to Victoria. He became a friend and correspondent of Georgiana, George Gordon McCrae's mother. 'The Buffalo Ranges' won first prize in a competition organized by the commissioners of the National Gallery in 1864. Soon after his arrival in Melbourne Clarke had expressed his admiration for Chevalier's work to Cyril Hopkins: 'We have a real live artist here. I mean an artist in the true sense of the word; a Monsieur Chevalier. His pictures are very clever – perhaps too microscopic; remind one of Birket Foster and Olssen mixed together.' Clarke made some detailed verbal revisions here when he recycled the paragraph. And the recycled paragraph was recycled again into his preface to Gordon's poems, as Samuel R. Simmons in *A Problem and a Solution* and L. T. Hergenhan in 'Marcus Clarke and the Colonial Landscape' have pointed out.

'The Australian mountain forests are funereal, secret, stern. Their solitude is desolation. They seem to stifle, in their black gorges, a story of sullen despair. No tender sentiment is nourished in their shade. In other lands the dying year is mourned, the falling leaves drop lightly on his bier. In the Australian forests no leaves fall. The savage winds shout among the rock clefts. From the melancholy gums strips of white bark hang and rustle. The very animal life of these frowning hills is either grotesque or ghostly. Great grey kangaroos hop noiselessly over the coarse grass. Flights of white cockatoos stream out, shrieking like evil souls. The sun suddenly sinks, and the mopokes burst out into horrible peals of semi-human laughter. The natives aver that, when night comes, from out the bottomless depth of some lagoon the bunyip rises, and, in form like a monstrous sea-calf, drags his loathsome length from out the ooze. From a corner of the silent

forest rises a dismal chant, and around a fire dance natives painted like skeletons. All is fear-inspiring and gloomy. No bright fancies are linked with the memories of the mountains. Hopeless explorers have named them out of their sufferings – Mount Misery, Mount Dreadful, Mount Despair. As when among sylvan scenes in places

Made green with the running of rivers,
And gracious with temperate air,

the soul is soothed and satisfied, so, placed before the frightful grandeur of these barren hills, it drinks in their sentiment of defiant ferocity, and is steeped in bitterness. And in this bitterness there is a weird and wild delight. Let us take an example.'

Clarke then quotes the opening of Kendall's 'The Fate of the Explorers', remarking: 'This is wonderfully accurate. It could not have been written by any but a man with an exquisitely keen sense of natural beauty, and a heart attuned to the special and immediate recognition of the fascination which dwells in loneliness and desolation.

'When Henry Kendall attempts love measures, mark how he falls into the style of Poe ... But in the following the bush-glamour is upon him again, and he gives us a picture unmatched for local colour and truth.'

Swarthy wastelands wide and woodless, glistening miles and miles away,
Where the south wind seldom wanders, and the winters will not stay:
Lurid wastelands, pent in silence, thick with hot and thirsty sighs,
Where the scanty thorn leaves twinkle with their haggard hopeless eyes;
Furnaced wastelands, trenched with hillocks, like to stony billows rolled,
Where the naked flats lie twirling, like a sea of darkened gold;
Burning wastelands, glancing upward with a weird and vacant stare,
Where the languid heavens quiver o'er red depths of stirless air!

The passage quoted is the opening of Kendall's 'Fainting By the Way'. After some close focus on 'the force of the epithets' Clarke remarks: 'The poetic instinct is sure and keen throughout.'

In the original text attached to the Chevalier painting, Clarke went on to refer to foreign rather than Australian writers: 'Amid all this sadness there is that weird delight, which Hoffman, Poe and Hawthorne have expressed in their stories.' In both the 'Country Leisure' article and the Gordon preface Clarke omitted this sentence but retained the adjective 'weird' and the reference to Poe, reshaping them into the memorable 'What is the dominant note of Australian scenery? That which is the dominant note of Edgar Allan Poe's poetry. Weird Melancholy.'

The phrase 'weird melancholy' achieved wide acceptance as a description of the bush, and as a characterization of Gordon's poetry, from its publication in the Gordon preface. But in the earlier 'Country Leisure' article, the recurrence of 'weird' in the quotations that Clarke makes from Kendall, and in his characterization of 'Ghost Glen' suggest that Kendall was very much in his mind. In the 'Country Leisure' piece, the paragraph from the description of 'The Buffalo Ranges' serves as a commentary on Kendall's poetry. But Clarke later recycled it again in his preface to Gordon's poetry. Interestingly, in his original text to Chevalier's portrayal of the Buffalo Ranges

Clarke had quoted a description of the Alpine Chain from *The Discovery and Exploration of Australia* (1865) by Gordon's old friend Julian Tenison Woods.

After dealing with Kendall, Clarke's 'Country Leisure' continues: 'No less accurate are the verses of Adam Lindsay Gordon – now gone to his rest – when he permits himself to speak of the scenery of the land where he laid his bones. In that most pathetic and beautiful of lyrics, "The Sick Stockrider" he writes

'Twas merry in the glowing morn, among the gleaming grass,
 To wander as we've wandered many a mile,
 And blow the cool tobacco cloud, and watch the white wreaths pass,
 Sitting loosely in the saddle all the while.
 'Twas merry 'mid the blackwoods, when we spied the station roofs,
 To wheel the wild scrub cattle at the yard,
 With a running fire of stockwhips and a fiery run of hoofs;
 Oh! the hardest day was never then too hard!

Aye! we had a glorious gallop after 'Starlight' and his gang,
 When they bolted from Sylvester's on the flat;
 How the sun-dried reed-beds crackled, how the flint-strewn ranges rang
 To the strokes of 'Mountaineer' and 'Acrobat'.
 Hard behind them in the timber, harder still across the heath,
 Close beside them through the tea-tree scrub we dash'd;
 And the golden-tinted fern leaves, how they rustled underneath
 And the honeysuckle osiers, how they crash'd!

'This is genuine. There is no "feather-bed soldier," no poetic "evolution from internal consciousness" here. The writer has ridden his ride, as well as written of it. The name of Gordon awakes sad memories in those who knew him. I will end this brief mention of his genius – though the classic student will find much to repay him in the many Browning-Landor poems which bear the poet's name – by the quotation of the last two stanzas of the poem ... Pray read the poem through, guest of mine, and tell me if you do not feel what Kingsley calls "a lump in your throat" at the last couplet.'

The last lines of the poem are italicized in Clarke's quotation:

*Let me slumber in the hollow where the wattle blossoms wave,
 With never stone or rail to fence my bed;
 Should the sturdy station children pull the bush flowers on my grave,
 I may chance to hear them romping overhead.*

Clarke then turns to a third member of the Yorick: 'Mr George Gordon McCrae has written some lyrics finished with the nicest taste, but there is in his writing little which may be claimed as purely Australian. Mr McCrae, in common with the majority of our writers, is Australian only by accident. His tastes and sympathies are all of the old world. At a "Carnival Ball," hanging over a

“Bridge at Calais,” or meditating upon the fate of the “Prisoner in the Iron Mask” he can utter the sweetest of notes, but the country of his adoption is to him bleak and barren of interest.

‘The same may be said in almost equal measure of your special Queenslander, Mr Brunton Stephens. Despite the “Our Hope,” which is inspired by true local influence, Mr Stephens does not fulfil the conditions of time and place. He thinks more of the singers of the Old World than of the beauties of the New. The Queensland National Anthem is highly poetical, but it might have been written at Susquehanna for all the Australian colour in it. I confess that it pained me to see so much brilliant talent wasted upon that foolish-clever rendering of Eugene Sue’s nonsense, which first introduced Mr Stephens to the Victorian public.

‘Charles Harpur, who, in Sydney in 1853, was well enough known, has written some stirring lines. The melancholy of the mountains was upon him ...’

Having quoted from Harpur, Clarke goes on to pay tribute to the pseudonymous verses of another contemporary from the Yorick, his friend Dr Patrick Moloney: ‘From time to time, some four or five years ago, there appeared in the columns of *The Australasian* – then the only paper in Australia which professed to foster native literary talent – a series of sonnets and short poems signed “Australis.” It is now known very well in Melbourne at all events, that “Australis” was the modest *nom de plume* of a young man who has earned for himself a fair and rapidly-won reputation in one of the learned professions. The writer writes no more, but some of his songs are, to my thinking, very much more like true poetry than one-half the stuff which is clique-praised or clique-blamed by the London Press. Let me ask you to listen to the following : -

I

In vain the magpie flutes from morning hills,
My early walks turn not to thee again,
I note not now how meet the love-lark trills,
Morns come and go, but rise to me in vain!
– In vain!

II

No more the twilight closes purple wings
Above us whispering by the silver shore,
Christ’s constellation from the south watch flings
Its benison on our pure loves no more!
– No more!

Clarke comments: ‘Is not this – albeit the somewhat affected refrain – purely beautiful? The “magpie is fluting from morning hills” is perfectly natural, and I admire the daring “*Christ’s constellation.*” But let us try another sonnet, written evidently in the springtime of both mind and season: -

O sweet Queen City of the Golden South,
Piercing the evening with thy starlight spires,
Thou wast a witness when I kissed the mouth
Of her whose eyes out-blazed the skiey fires.

I saw the parallels of thy long streets,
 With lamps like angels shining all a-row,
 While overhead the Empyræan seats
 Of gods, were steeped in Paradisiac glow.
 The Pleiades with rarer fires were tipt,
 Hesper sat throned upon his jewelled chair,
 The Petted Giants triple stars were dipt
 In all the splendour of Olympian air.
 On high, to bless, the Southern Cross did shine
 Like that which blazed o'er conquering Constantine!

'There is an Elizabethan breath about this melodious verse which reminds us of Herrick or Suckling, and yet all is attuned and tempered to the climate. "Australis" has a very delicate appreciation for the large moons, the balmy airs, the heat-born mists of his native land.'

After quoting another eight lines from 'Australis', Clarke announces: 'But now for a true Australian ballad – wild, weird, and terrible – the "Ghost Glen" of Henry Kendall.' Clarke quotes the poem in full, and comments: 'This is the true "Spirit of the Lands." I stand at the door of my cottage and see the evening shadows creep up and enfold the strange and haggard trees. All is fantastic and unreal. The moon is frightened to rise. The mountains murmur. Nature seems naked and ashamed. Yet how wildly, how subtly sweet is the charm of this desolation, or rather this ignorance of culture.'

The essay concludes with a now justly famous passage, originally attached to Louis Buvelôt's 'Waterpool near Coleraine' in the text to the May 1874 number of *Pictures in the National Gallery*. 'Australia has rightly been named the Land of the Dawning. Wrapped in the mists of early morning, her history looms vague and gigantic. The lonely horseman riding between the moon light and the day sees vast shadows creeping across the shelterless and silent plains, hears strange noises in the primeval forest where flourishes a vegetation long dead in other lands, and feels, despite his fortune, that the trim utilitarian civilization which bred him shrinks into insignificance beside the contemptuous grandeur of forests and ranges coeval with an age in which European scientists have cradled his own race.

'There is a poem in every form of tree or flower, but the poetry which lives in the trees and flowers of Australia differs from those of other countries. Europe is the home of knightly song, of bright deeds and clear morning thought. Asia sinks beneath the weighty recollections of her past magnificence, as the Suttee sinks jewel burdened upon the corpse of dread grandeur, destructive even in its death. America swiftly hurries on her way, rapid, glittering, insatiable even as one of her own giant waterfalls. From the jungles of Africa, and the creeper-tangled groves of the Islands of the South, arise, from the glowing hearts of a thousand flowers, heavy and intoxicating odours – the Upas-poison which dwells in barbaric sensuality. In Australia alone is to be found the grotesque, the weird, the strange scribblings of Nature learning how to write. Some see no beauty in our trees without shade, our flowers without perfume, our birds who cannot fly, and our beasts who have not yet learned to walk on all fours. But the dweller in the wilderness

acknowledges the subtle charm of this fantastic land of monstrosities. He becomes familiar with the beauty of loneliness. Whispered to by the myriad tongues of the wilderness, he learns the language of the barren and the uncouth, and can read the hieroglyphs of haggard gum-trees, blown into odd shapes, distorted with fierce hot winds, or cramped with cold nights when the Southern Cross freezes in a cloudless sky of icy blue. The phantasmagoria of that wild dreamland termed the Bush interprets itself, and the poet of our desolation begins to comprehend why free Esau loved his heritage of desert sand better than all the bountiful richness of Egypt.'

As before, Clarke made some detailed verbal revisions both when he recycled the paragraph here and in the Gordon preface, notably replacing 'he begins to understand' at the end of the passage with 'the poet of our desolation begins to comprehend', glossing the earlier 'dweller in the wilderness'. Was it Kendall, or Gordon, or indeed himself he had in mind as 'the poet of our desolation'?



By 1875 the cedar had pretty well all been cleared out from the Gosford district and Michael Fagan set up a new branch of the family business further north. Sutherland writes in Turner and Sutherland: 'One of the brothers was at this time starting a new business at the head of a lonely little inlet named Camden Haven, on the coast two hundred miles north of Sydney. He offered to Kendall the position of accountant and paymaster of it. The unhappy poet gladly accepted, and transferred himself to the pretty spot, where, upon a lovely bend in a quiet little river, a house was built for him in which his wife soon joined him. Behind the Haven rise the wooded slopes of the fine coast ranges that lie between the Manning river and the Macleay. Deep in the tangled forest there grew abundance of cedar trees, and the new business was concerned in employing some sixty or seventy men on contract to cut these trees and deliver the great red logs by the shores of the Haven, whence a few sailing craft belonging to the firm carried them to the timber-yards of the brothers Fagan in Sydney. Kendall's duty was to receive the timber, pay for it, supervise the execution of all contracts for cutting, and keep all the necessary books.'

According to Wendy H. Isaac's researches in *Footprints and Foundations: The Early Dwellings and Residents 1860–1960 – Kendall*: 'Fagan Brothers started their timber splitting and store at Jerry's Wharf and by 1870 the mill was in full production.' Jerry's Wharf was at Batar, south-west of Camden Haven. It was named after a Javanese man, 'thought to be the first to cut timber in the Batar area'. According to *The Port Macquarie News*, 2 November 1912: 'It was here that Fagan Bros. opened their first store, with Henry Kendall as their book and storekeeper.' Henry lived in a small hut on the river bank until the business moved to Camden Haven. Isaac records: 'In 1875, the Fagan family established a general store with living quarters. This was achieved by moving their business from Jerry's Wharf, on the banks of the Camden Haven River, at Batar, to this site ... It was this store that Henry Kendall managed whilst living on the premises. Fagan's built a new residence for Henry on an adjoining lot. The residence was completed in May 1876 and Henry's wife Charlotte moved from Sydney to join him in July

1876.’ The store was at 11 Main Street, Camden Haven. Camden Haven was renamed Kendall in 1891 and Main Street renamed Comboyne Street in 1947. The house burned down c.1900. After Henry left in 1881 Fagan’s built a new general store on the adjacent blocks 9, 11 and 13. It still exists.

Kendall was now reunited with his wife and eldest son, Frederick. Frederick recalled his parents at this time in *Henry Kendall: His Later Years*: ‘I lived with them as a boy from 1876 to 1881, i.e., from the age of six to that of eleven, at Camden Haven and Cundletown and my memory is absolutely clear as to that time. I know their home life was on the whole as united as that of most couples. They had ordinary differences on immaterial points as other married couples, I believe, have, but they had also many sunny hours. At times my father, like other men of poetical genius, was very temperamental and difficult, to put it mildly, but life as a rule went on smoothly. The past, especially his unhappy early life, weighed constantly upon him ... Even in his final and happiest years, the black moods of retrospection would envelop him, strangely enough after an evening of animated and humanly merry conversation, as if he thought himself guilty of forgetfulness ... At such times he would seek the delusive consolation of alcohol. His best friends and his dearest ones were then open to misunderstanding and even unjust accusation, though all did their best to humour and soothe him. He was not, like some other poets, a hearty, unashamed Bacchanalian, but became for a time, in turns, querulous, sentimental, suspicious, and even insulting. The trouble was not that he drank much but that he was physically unfitted to drink at all. In fact he might have been considered temperate, in a quantitative sense, compared with other public men of those days.’

Frederick remembered the house as a spacious weatherboard cottage with a shingle roof and a very wide verandah round three sides, standing a few yards from the main road leading up to the river. It consisted of six rooms with a hallway. Occupying one end was a large store stocked with goods sold to the settlers. There was a fenced off flower garden at the front. Frederick adds: ‘A houseboy and two or three other lads were employed by Mr Fagan about the farm, and my mother paid for a nursemaid to help her with the younger children as there was much to do otherwise.’ Kendall spent most of his time in the store working as book-keeper and salesman and keeping tally of the timber bought in by the timber cutters. He wrote at night, and in rare occasional lulls in the day. If he required quiet Charlotte would send the younger children off with the nurse to a farm across the river. Frederick recalled that the few books included volumes by Shelley, Byron, Mrs Browning, Tennyson, Swinburne, Gordon, Harpur, Brunton Stephens, and Roget’s *Thesaurus*, Smith’s *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities* and Heaton’s *Dictionary of Dates*.

Frederick recalled: ‘Camden Haven indeed was very isolated in those days. The advent of the papers and weekly mail gave everyone in this lonely home a revival of interests, and the household would assemble in the evenings on the great verandah to canvass all the great news. My father had a wide range of correspondents in the various cities. Perhaps at such times he would read aloud his latest verses ...

‘He was of a humane nature, fond of birds and animals, especially horses, and by the way he was perfectly conversant with all current turf events and performances. He did no shooting for sport, except in one instance, referred to in Mr Joseph Fagan’s letter. Even the feelings of a reptile were to his mind to be respected and he made quite a scene when someone had burned alive a black snake.’

Joseph Fagan’s letter quoted by Frederick records: ‘I remember him taking a gun from a fellow one day at Camden Haven that he was talking to and fired at a magpie that was flying overhead very high up and the magpie fell dead as a stone. He always maintained it was an accidental shot but he was afterwards considered the crack shot of the district, but he used to say, “They will never get me to try again as I would probably lose my reputation as a marksman.”’

It was, Frederick recalls, ‘to my mother’s credit that she so well conserved her husband’s slender resources that he was for the first time in his life out of debt.’



Charlotte herself recalled Kendall in these years in a letter to Sutherland, 6 September 1882, which Frederick annexed to his memoir: ‘His habits were very regular because for the last five years he lived with the Messrs Fagan Brothers, who were in business. He was not an early riser because he was a bad sleeper, so his morning sleep was indulged in, especially in winter time; he always felt the cold acutely, being so very thin. In summer time he liked to be up early as the birds’ singing charmed him. The Cat-bird, Bell-bird and Coachman’s Whip were in his memory from childhood. There was a beautiful glimpse of river scenery from our house blended with a dark brush so cool and mossy; we used to go out boating on the river at Camden Haven and there was always one spot he looked out for, that was always so fresh and green, close to the water. His eyes used to light up and he would laugh at me and say, “Lottie, is your garden always bright and green like that mossy spot?” Latterly he became a great smoker, he used to say he gathered his ideas whilst he was smoking. He generally in the winter stood in the sun while he indulged in the smoke. I’ve seen him thinking and shaking his head and reciting something low. He was very fond of solitude although when he was in a humorous mood he was splendid company. After talking or spending an evening in that manner he became depressed in spirits, just as if the outburst of humour had caused a reaction. He was very much attached to clean children, especially little girls; he used to say what a wonder world this must be to children and how he would like to know their little thoughts. When our little Persia was about two years old, he used to be pleased to be the first to show her anything novel, just to watch her wonder expression. She is the little one he called Persia. His favourite poets were Shelley, whom he lectured on when he was quite a young man; Mrs Browning he admired very much. Swinburne also for some things. The first glimpse he had of his works was a in a bookseller’s shop in Sydney and he told the man there would be a great run on the book in a few weeks – he laughed at him. Mr Kendall was correct – in a few weeks after, he met him and told him that the book has sold remarkably well. Mr McCrae, I think, used to converse a great deal with him, he could tell you a great deal. I

remember Mr Kendall reading a poem written by Tennyson; the plot of it was a mother's only son who was to be hanged for some crime. She brings up in her raving all his little sayings as a child and dares the law to take them from her. The words were ghastly I thought. She says, "Bone of my side, Flesh of my flesh." I think they are the words. Mr Kendall considered it a wonderful poem – this occurred about two years ago. He used to like me to sit near him – as he said – every time I came near him he caught a new idea and that my presence made him feel so pure. He never sent away a poem without asking me to kiss that paper and it would be a success. I merely mention these little things to you to let you know he was very much attached to me. He was not fond of mixing in society. The ordinary drawing-room chit-chat wearied him; dancing he had a horror of, especially for married ladies – although as a girl I could devote an evening to it – since my marriage I have not spent an evening that way; he disliked it, so I could not have enjoyed myself. I became accustomed to his way of spending evenings and I have never regretted doing so.'



December 1875 George Robertson published Clarke's *'Twixt Shadow and Shine: An Australian Story of Christmas*. This, unlike his previous novels, had not been first published as a serial, but was pitched, its subtitle suggests, at the Christmas market. Clarke had taken a phrase from Gordon for its title, and drawn its characters from the surviving members of the Cave of Adullam, as *The Argus* reviewer noted, 18 December: 'each, we suspect, is the embodiment of some salient trait of character belonging to an individual member of that club of Native Companions which is described as holding its meetings in a three-roomed house in a place called Blossom's Alley, behind the Peacock office.'

The same month Clarke received recognition from England. Mackinnon quotes Edward Levy-Lawson, the owner of the London *Daily Telegraph*, writing to Clarke, 2 December 1875: 'Without having the pleasure of your personal acquaintance, I am sure you will pardon me if I venture to address you on a subject which may not be without interest. I have read your books with very great pleasure, and it has occurred to me that you possess most of the qualifications for journalism of the highest order. Has the idea ever occurred to you of adopting this branch of literature, and would it suit your views to come to England? I am, of course, ignorant of what your position may be, and ignorant of any feelings that you may have upon the subject. It is quite possible that ties may bind you to Australia – ties that you cannot break. If, however, the idea should have entered into your mind, tell me in a letter what your position is, what income you would require to entice you to come to London, whether you feel yourself competent for journalistic work, whether you have ever done any, and if you have, you would perhaps think it advisable to send me, by the next mail, samples of your work. If, moreover, for the moment the notion should seem acceptable to you, sit down and write me three or four leading articles that will make about a column of our newspaper matter; and put into them as much force and vigour as you can command. Under any circumstances, whether my ideas waken any sympathy in your

mind or not, I am sure you will permit me to congratulate you on the success your works have met with here.’

This was an invitation of some significance. The *Telegraph* boasted ‘the largest circulation in the world’ of any newspaper. And it had literary credentials; it was for the *Telegraph* that Trollope had written the letters from Australia that became the basis of his book *Australia and New Zealand*.

In the event, Clarke never went back to England, but he took up the invitation to contribute to the *Telegraph*.

Turner recalled in the *Melbourne Review*: ‘The position of Melbourne correspondent to the London *Daily Telegraph* was conferred upon him in most flattering terms by the managing proprietor, in a letter which he was fond of showing to his friends as a specimen of the broad liberality with which this important journal provided for its ubiquitous representation. A few years afterwards a very handsome offer was made to him by the same paper to join their staff of “specials,” at a liberal salary; but as it involved proceeding at once to London, and then holding himself in readiness to be dispatched, on the instant, to any part of the globe where war, famine, pestilence, earthquake, or any other exceptional condition required special chronicle, he was reluctantly compelled to refuse the overture. His desire for adventure of this character was very strong, but it is extremely doubtful if his physique was equal to the strain that would have been put upon it, and he wisely concluded that a young wife and infantile family might be justly pleaded as a legitimate excuse for declining the honour.’



Frank Myers published a recollection ‘Of Marcus Clarke (and Some Others)’ in *The Bulletin*, 26 November 1903. The others include William Saurin Lyster, the Dublin-born American entrepreneur who had brought the first full-time opera company to Australia in 1861, Patrick Moloney, John Joshua Shillinglaw, and Richard Birnie. Myers writes of Clarke: ‘He was nice. It is not a flattering term in masculine association, but it fitted him like a glove. And his niceness was as a velvet cushion whereon to display the few facets – not one of them a perfect jewel – of his genius.

‘Nice as his surroundings he seemed when I met him, in the year 1876. It was late January, and fiercely hot, but within the National Gallery there was coolness and rest, and in the room with the pleasant outlook off the library just such surroundings as a literary man might desire.

‘I had a bundle of manuscript, and no other introduction whatever. Nevertheless the “lips of laughter” moved pleasantly and the “eyes of light” shone in a little while, and I got a glimpse of the most charming personality that has so far graced the literary world of Australia. He had only the old familiar counsel as to the literary life. “If you want to prove that life is not worth living, persist.”

‘It was discordant with himself as with his surroundings. And when after a while the door was suddenly opened, and with a lot of frou-frou and flutter, and “you’re a very pretty fellow, aren’t

you,” a tall and stately lady faced him, I was not a bit more convinced. (That lady, I learned later, was not remotely connected with a novel in which a Dr de la Morte figured largely.)’

The novel Myers alludes to is *Checkmated* by Cecilia Padmore Hill, a roman à clef loosely based on the suicide of the young actress Marie St Denis (Therese L’Étrange), and involving Sir Redmond Barry (Sir Ronald Evergreen), Dr J. E. Neild, and Captain Standish. Myers continues:

“‘Come up this evening,” he said, “and we will dine together at the club.”

‘The club was the Birdcage, in all its glory – Butters’ birdcage, just opposite *The Argus* office. Don’t look for it now. It seemed a place of glory from the threshold inward that night. Butters was then in his prime, fresh from his Premiership in Fiji, a Rob Roy in modern costume – the Butters costume, which has never changed. And round about, in the vestibule, a score of men, who talked of big affairs in city life. The waiters, who moved with noiseless grace, were full-blooded Fijians, and the whole interior was a glory of palms and ferns.

‘Clarke was very quiet, but persistent. He got exactly what he wanted and without any fuss. When we had found our seats in the dining hall it seemed that, without any pre-concerted arrangement, Dr P. Moloney and W. Saurin Lyster were right opposite, and Fitzgibbon, the Fitz of Tom Carrington’s cartoons, was but half-a-dozen chairs away, and two or three other men, who had read all the magazines and remembered strangely well, near about.

‘The doctor talked most, I think, and the subject was the book and the lady I have mentioned. Clarke listened persistently. He was making up his mind. Later on, as if to change the subject, he said, “I have been looking up some nice novels and verses, Fanny and Mortimer Collins.” Later still, I knew to what end he had looked them up.

‘That dinner beneath the palms and the ferns, with the gorgeous service on the table, seemed a triumph. And indeed it was no mean feast, for Butters knew the art of dining fairly well. There was turtle, venison, and every sort of Australian game. There were mangoes nursed all the way from tree to table, there was pineapple marvellously served in great silver bowls, there were figs which, like the cherries of Arnold’s “Sick King in Bokhara,” had been steeped in drifts of snow. There were ice cones along the table mantled in flowers. There was delicious coolness and fragrance in the air, with well ordered luxury and beauty all around. And he took it all as a natural part of life, as one of the proprietors, so to speak. I had been “a-droving” from the Warrego right down to Gippsland and was in Melbourne for a week or two. And – “if you want to prove that life is not worth living, persist.”

‘Lyster cut the dinner short. “I’ve got the Governor tonight,” said he: “must go.”

‘Clarke said we would go too. And so we turned the Town Hall corner and into Bourke Street and halted for a moment with the crowd. Lyster was ahead. We saw him marshalling a half-dozen flunkeys with a great crimson carpet. As the outsiders clattered up they rolled it to the kerb. Down then came Lyster to the carriage door, handing out my lady, and greeting old Sir George Bowen beribboned and starred. (Nobody has done that thing quite in the same style since Lyster’s day). We followed them up the carpet as of right, and my companion’s name was on many lips in the mob below. The manager’s box was at our disposal, and when the show began (it was only pantomime and not very fine), there was evidently a very fascinating *entente cordiale* between

that box and the stage, all the approaches coming from thither. He responded indifferently and cut suddenly across all my unprofitable musings with "Don't you think Lyster a singularly handsome man?"

'I had not thought seriously about it.

"He seems to me the exact image of an old Assyrian king."

'I realized it instantly then and have never forgotten it. You may see the head of W. S. Lyster on many of the rock fragments recovered from Babylon and Nineveh, and the artist who would have painted Belshazzar in his pride might have taken him for a model.

"I have to put in a little time at my office," said he about nine, "will you wait here or come into the vestibule?"

'The lonely box menaced irksomeness or worse. We went out and encountered a lame man with a rubicund visage and a wicked eye, whom Clarke called Thersites, and other men "Jos," and that lame man said many things pleasant to hear and very fit for *viva voce* publication. But he became crow when a tall and thin old man climbed the stair and fastened onto us garrulous.

"Who is it?"

"Old Dick Birnie of *The Australasian*."

'Great God, I had thought of a Browning's bishop, a Blougram, sitting in that chair. He was the first discordant or convincing note. "If you want to prove that life is not worth living, persist." The essayist had always been associated in my mind with epicurean surroundings, Erasmus-like erudition, and all the splendour of unclouded intellect. I will not seek to portray him; he has gone to his rest long since.

'He smote one flash out of "Jos," who tried from the outset to talk down his tedious pedantic mumbling – "Jos! Jos! You have *cacæthes loquendi*."

"I have not! I've got fever and measles and cancer and leprosy and paralysis; and other things if you like. But I haven't got that."

"There is time for another look at the club," said Clarke, returning.

'And then to the palms and the ferns and the splendour we returned, the lame man accompanying. But the way this time was upstairs to a room tolerably bare save of what seemed most desirable human furnishings. The smoke was heavy, the liquor earnest, the beards wagged and the broad, smooth faces shone.

Suddenly up rose Butters in the midst of all and shouted "Ronald Macdonald."

'Why did not all that broadcloth and fine linen fall away from him, and kilts, tartan, sporran, and blackcock's feathers materialize in their stead? Never was there such a Rob Roy Macgregor.

'To the call we formed in a ring and "Hey for Ronald Macdonald!" was sung with much zest and glory.

'That was an acknowledged good night at the club. There were others later; but we went quietly down to the old Port Philip Club, and after ten minutes such talk as was there in Spooner's time, he took the last train to Brighton. I returned to town repeating once again, "If you want to prove that life is not worth living, persist!" What?



Myers' account continues with a visit to the property Lyster had bought some ten years earlier at Narree Worran Grange, where he had drained the tea-tree swamp and established a state of the art dairy farm:

'Later in the week Clarke said, "Would you like a day or two at Lyster's place in the bush?"

'Thus came it that we arrived at that pleasant home Lyster had made for himself a couple of miles east of Fern Tree Gully. There in occasional hours, when our host had told his yarn of life, that is very fit to put into a book, and when the Sweet Singer had gone down to the mulberries or to look for imaginary trout in the creek, Clarke would talk at large and lament, querulous and unreasonable as it seemed, disclosing another sort of being not much to be envied. We were right on the edge of the big bush. A half-hour's walk would take one into the true *Amygdalina* forest, one of the wonders of the world. I do not think Clarke on any occasion took that walk willingly. I know he had not the faintest perception of the character, the sentiment, the glory of the forest. I often contrast him in memory with John Ford Paterson, the artist, who also lived a good deal about the big bush, and who used to say with bated breath almost, "It is well for ye if ye can catch a little bit of the idea of the like of that."

'Clarke said, "If you get right on top of the range, and it is a beastly walk, you will see the Yarra Flats on the other side. Castella's place is just out of the view. I must introduce you to Bleasdale. He will take you out to Castella's. They make rare wine and give you a jolly good dinner as well."

'Similarly when talk turned to outside country (surely he who wrote the introduction to Gordon's poems must understand outside) the sense of drawing a blank was painful. He hated the bush and all its discomforts too thoroughly to understand a bit of it. The Wimmera was "nice country enough, Mount Zero, and the rest!" But what of that rampart-like front of the Grampians, with its wing of low hills skirting Australia Felix and reaching right round to the coast of Mount Aurepiles, lone and strange out there on the misty plain? Of Wimmera and Yarrambiak, meandering away inland, repeating, in miniature, all the mysterious inland river system of the continent? Of the glassy sheets of water, and the innumerable wild fowl rising with thunderous beat of wings in the night hours? Of the strange, mysterious swamps, reed covered, bittern and curlew-haunted, about the mountain's feet? Of the gigantic oaks and gums on the sand ridges, finest in all Australia, I think, in those days? Of the webs of their foliage against the evening and the morning sky? He had never seen them. He did not know them. He had not got beyond "Mount Zero and the rest; very nice; yes." He would rather have one smell of the fleshpots than the heritage of desolation whole and undivided.

'I write this without any intent of depreciation and in full knowledge of what certain very distinguished people have to say on the other side. "He acquired knowledge," say Messrs Sutherland and Turner, in that fool book of theirs, *The Development of Australian Literature*, "that impressed the seal of truthfulness on his description of the Australian bush to an extent unequalled by any author who has essayed the theme." And this, in 1898, when some others who did know had essayed.

‘Clarke would not talk of his own work. I do not think he had pleasure in writing one single line unless that line was a lash and the object of his aversion well within reach. He did a good deal of that sort of thing, and out of a whole heart in his later days. Of books he talked curiously. The larger lights of the world, even as the wider horizon of Australia, seemed in some mysterious way beyond his ken. He would talk of Theodore Hook, Leigh Hunt, Praed, Clough, Pater, Hamerton; but Browning was “a weariness to body and soul,” and if one spoke of Spenser as a gold mine, he retorted, “Dig him, then, if you will; I myself prefer the minted coin.” A very little intercourse served to clinch the conviction that he held everything save the joy of life in utter contempt. If a true pathos seized and compelled him at times as in “Holiday Peak” and “Pretty Dick,” he held it as a hateful obsession. Of his great book he said, “It is a chamber of horrors indifferently assorted, and confound it, it doesn’t draw!”

‘I was equally delighted and disillusioned on that trip. Never was there a merrier, kinder, less exigent companion. Take him as such, as those who knew and loved him best did, and all was very well. But regard him as the bulk whence samples had been given to the world in all his fragmentary work, and the disappointment was keen. He regarded, or affected to regard, those fragments as shed scales of a foul disease. As is very well known, he took this view seriously in his writings. Whether there was any hidden regard for them I had no opportunity of discovering. It seems impossible that such fairy children as “Holiday Peak” and “Pretty Dick” should not have a permanent abiding-place in some close-walled chamber of their creator’s mind.

‘Getting back to town unless at the close of a roistering day is usually a serious affair, and I have always tried to shun the memories of that morning drive. When Lyster spoke of London and the prospect of migrating thither, Clarke answered, “Ask the Lord and his prophets!” When the Sweet Singer trilled a bit in response to a magpie who sang divinely on a dead bough by the big hill, he said, “That bird is typical of everything Australian. There is something in him but it can’t get out.”



Kenneth Binns, the librarian in charge of the Commonwealth National Library, wrote to *The Argus*, 28 November 1923, about some discoveries ‘while inspecting some early copyright records in the Commonwealth Copyright Office’ in order to ascertain the date of Gordon’s publications. ‘It is particularly interesting and important therefore to find from the copyright entry under the Victorian Copyright Act of 1869 that *Ashtaroth* was published nine days before *Sea Spray and Smoke Drift*. The entries are amongst the earliest under this act, being numbers 25, 26 and 27, the occasion being the publication of *Bush Ballads*, and the date of entry June 25, 1870, which as lovers of Gordon will remember, was the day after his death. Copyright in all three works was applied for and obtained by Clarson, Massina and Co., which is curious by reason of the fact that the name of George Robertson appears on the title page of *Sea Spray and Smoke Drift* as publisher. No doubt the lack of success which attended it (only 100 copies having been sold) resulted in that firm’s handing over their rights to the printers and publishers of Gordon’s

other two works.' Ronald Campbell comments in his history of Massina's: 'Some mystery still surrounds the Gordon copyrights. If Mrs Gordon owned the rights, how were Clarson, Massina and Co. able to register them in their name the day after he died? If Gordon had made them over to the firm, how did it come about that he still owed them for the printing?'

Some correspondence is preserved in W. Park Low's papers. Back in December 1871 Clarson, Massina & Co. wrote to Maggie: 'The three books were registered by us and we think had better not be disturbed until you visit Melbourne when we will transfer to you. There will be some expense attending transfer while you are out of the colony and this may be avoided for your purposes by our giving your full permission to do what you deem best with the copyright; and our assurance of our readiness to transfer whenever called upon to do so. There remains a balance due to us but we have written it off hoping that a few sales effected might reduce it. We shall readily fall in with your wishes whatever they may be.'

Matters seem to have been unresolved, however. 24 December 1874 Clarson, Massina & Co. wrote to Peter Low in response to Maggie's claim to the copyright of Gordon's poems: 'As we are not aware that your wife is the legal representative of the late Adam Lindsay Gordon we must decline to give up any rights we possess in the matter, at the same time we cannot prevent her from using the copyright in any place out of the limits of this colony; but if any use is made of it here we shall be obliged to protect ourselves. We have much of the old stock now on hand and if Mrs Low likes to purchase what we have in stock we shall be happy to sell it to her; but we would remind her that so long as we stood to lose all our money no person offered to take the stock off our hands and now that we have a probability of making a profit out of the transaction, there suddenly springs up a claimant. In looking over all the old documents with relation to this matter we find an acceptance of Mr Gordon which was dishonoured for £70 besides an account open. We presume that Mrs Low would not like to pay this small amount. We think considering all the circumstances of the case we would not be acting justly to ourselves, to give up any advantages which we may possess from the copyright in this colony at the same time we shall not interfere with any use which may be made of the works of Mr Gordon, so long as our copies of any of the poems are circulated in this colony. If your wife has any friends in Melbourne, we should be happy to meet them and see how far we could meet her wishes, without infringing our own rights in the matter. We would do this in respect for the memory of the late Mr Gordon who was one of our most esteemed friends.'

Peter Low replied from Yallum Park, 19 January 1875: 'Yours of the 4th ultra came to hand in due time of which differs very widely from any of your previous letters on this matter. Certainly you are not aware that my wife is the only legal representative of the late Adam Lindsay Gordon but in short I hope to make you acquainted as to whether she is or is not. You have communicated with my wife concerning the copyright some years ago when she was Mrs Gordon and now you want to make out that she has just sprung up to claim the copyright. And as for the acceptance of Mr Gordon's that was dishonoured for £70 – she has nothing to do with it nor any of his accounts. In your last letter to my wife you said you were quite willing to give up the copyright and did not

mention any thing about the £70 – or any accounts but if you make me a liberal offer for the copyright we may come to terms.’

An undated draft letter survives in Peter Low’s correspondence: ‘I will accept your offer of eight pounds per annum for three years for the right to publish the works of my late husband (Mr A. L. Gordon) ...’



In 1876 Clarson, Massina & Co. reissued Gordon’s *Sea-Spray and Smoke Drift*, with a preface by Marcus Clarke: ‘The poems of Gordon have an interest beyond the mere personal one which his friends attach to his name. Written, as they were, at odd times and leisure moments of a stirring and adventurous life, it is not to be wondered at if they are unequal or unfinished. The astonishment of those who knew the man, and can gauge the capacity of this city to foster poetic instinct, is, that such work was ever produced here at all.’

The Argus reviewed it, 18 March: ‘A cheap edition of the late Adam Lindsay Gordon’s *Sea Spray and Smoke Drift* will help to carry one of the most distinctive Australian books that has been published, into many a settler’s cabin and shepherd’s hut. Few of the poems are on local subjects; but you feel as you read them that they were most of them composed on horseback and in the bush; that they convey the varying moods of the writer’s mind under the changing influences of the surrounding scenery; and that the free swing of the verse and the impetuous flow of the language, express that exhilaration of mind which even the most prosaic of mortals cannot help feeling when, mounted on a good horse, he gallops across some of the park-like opening which formerly stretched for miles without fence and without the sign of a human habitation in the interior of this colony. Others of the poems are full of those vague self questionings which crowd in upon the mind of a man who is melancholy by temperament and introspective by habit, as he sits musingly over the dying embers of a camp-fire in the ghostly silence of an Australian night oppressed by “the burden of the mystery of all this unintelligible world.” At such time the poet asks himself :

‘Is nothing real but confusion?

‘Is nothing certain but death?

‘Is nothing fair save illusion?

‘Is nothing good that has breath?

‘We know the answer which came to this question, in Mr Gordon’s case; and knowing it, we can the better understand why he leaped into the dark. To the present edition of his poems Mr Marcus Clarke has attached a sympathetically written preface and the book will be welcome to all who can appreciate freshness of thought and lyrical melody of expression.’

Clarke’s preface was reprinted in 1880 when A. H. Massina reissued *Sea-Spray and Smoke Drift* combined with the earlier *Bush Ballads and Galloping Rhymes* and *Ashtaroth* under the title *Poems of the Late Adam Lindsay Gordon*. Campbell recorded in his history of Massina’s: ‘Gordon’s *Poems* was another best-seller, 20,000 volumes being disposed of between 1880 and

the end of the decade.’ Marianne Ehrhardt lists twenty-four editions in the next twenty-eight years. Ian McLaren assembled 88 editions and variations of it containing the preface in his collection of Gordon’s works, now in the Baillieu Library, University of Melbourne.

Maggie did not benefit. She told *The Advertiser* in 1912: ‘I had the copyrights of all the books, but I sold them about thirty years ago for a very small sum, much less than they were worth, and since then I have had no advantage from the sale of the books. I have often regretted parting with the rights, but it is too late to trouble about that now.’

Catherine Bond points out in “‘Curse the Law!’” that according to the first colonially enacted copyright statute, the Victorian Copyright Act of 1869, copyright was deemed to ‘endure for the natural life’ of an author ‘and for the further term of seven years commencing at the time of his death’ or 42 years, whichever period was longer. The International Copyright Act 1886 (Imp) subsequently provided protection throughout the British empire for books originally published in one of the dominions. 24 June 1912 the *Herald* reported: ‘It is forty-two years today since Adam Lindsay Gordon shot himself at Brighton Beach, and the copyright of his *Bush Ballads and Galloping Rhymes* expired yesterday, under the present Imperial Copyright Act.’

As a consequence three editions of Gordon’s poems were published in Britain that year: from Oxford University Press, edited by Frank Maldon Robb, from Constable, edited by Douglas Sladen, and from T. N. Foulis. The same year Constable published the substantial *Adam Lindsay Gordon and His Friends in England and Australia*, by Edith Humphris and Douglas Sladen, containing a lengthy biography by Sladen and extensive ancillary material.



Clarke’s preface to Gordon’s poems contains some sketchy biographical details and recollections. ‘I do not propose to criticize the volumes which these few lines of preface introduce to the reader,’ Clarke announced, but he did remark that ‘in such poems as the “Sick Stockrider” we perceive the genuine poetic instinct united to a very clear perception of the loveliness of duty and labour.’ And Clarke again proclaimed the achievement of what he and Gordon and Kendall had been labouring to establish, the foundations of a future literature of Australia: ‘The student of these unpretending volumes will be repaid for his labour. He will find in them something very like the beginnings of a national school of Australian poetry.’

About a third of the preface is new. For the other two-thirds, Clarke recycled material from his ‘Country Leisure’ essay of the previous year, including the material already recycled from his text to *Pictures in the National Gallery Melbourne*. Recycling a description of a couple of paintings and a literary column might seem a strange way to write a preface to a friend’s book. But we do not know Clarke’s immediate circumstances at the time – how busy, how stressed, how pressed for time he was. After his bankruptcy and the consequent sale of his library in 1874, he may not have had copies of Gordon’s books to work from. Among the volumes listed in the sale catalogue were Gordon’s *Ashtaroth*, marked ‘scarce’ and ‘now out of print’, *Sea Spray and Smoke-drift*, in a ‘special edition, on toned paper’, and *Bush Ballads and Galloping Rhymes*.

Perhaps he was unable to assemble adequate biographical details; perhaps he found himself unable or unwilling to write extended literary criticism. Perhaps he felt the material he had written on the paintings and re-cycled for 'Country Leisure' was too good to be lost to view, so used it again. In that he was correct. It contains some of the best known writing about the Australian bush ever written, in striking contrast to Clarke's apparent disregard for the bush in Frank Myers' anecdote. The preface has been endlessly reprinted and cited, not only in editions of Gordon's and Clarke's work, but in anthologies and studies of both Australian literary criticism and Australian landscape. Shorn of its reference to Gordon, Mackinnon reprinted a section of Clarke's preface as 'Australian Scenery' in the *Memorial Volume* and *Austral Edition*, from which it was reprinted in selections of Clarke's stories.

Cyril Hopkins reflected on Clarke's impressions of Australian scenery: 'These are to be found in scattered passages throughout his works, but nowhere in such striking form as in his well known introduction to Adam Lindsay Gordon's volume of bush ballads, so much so, that it has come to be regarded less as an essay on their poetical merits than as one on his own impressions of Australian scenery. Be that as it may, however, this introduction or preface to Gordon's verses was regarded by Lord Lytton and other eminent literary men as the finest piece of work that ever came from the pen of Marcus Clarke.'

Hopkins continued: 'Immaterial whether every allusion to the animal and vegetable life of the region he is describing – his version of its fauna and flora – be or be not strictly accurate. He is merely striving to reproduce, in striking and brilliant language, the mental impressions acquired during his sojourn in its midst, impressions of a wild nature which had awed and yet partly captivated his easily excited imagination and which continued to haunt it long after he had left the scenes where it is present, and was living amidst quite other surroundings, just as the refrain of some melody, learnt in childhood, haunts us at intervals throughout our after-life, forgotten for long periods at a time but suddenly recurring to our memory and never entirely losing its potency and charm. In short, he is aiming at drawing a vivid picture of certain phenomena which he had studied at close quarters and of thus conveying to his readers some idea of that "subtle charm" attributed by himself and by others to the nature of the wild Australian bush.'

Sladen records in Humphris and Sladen: 'General Gordon, the hero of Khartoum, and Adam Lindsay Gordon, who were at Woolwich together, were great friends, and the General at any rate believed the poet to be related to him in the liberal Scottish way. I have seen this in the General's own handwriting. He presented a copy of Lindsay Gordon's *Poems* to General Sir Andrew Clarke, R.E., who was so long Agent-General for Victoria in London, with the inscription "From Charley to Andrew. He was a kind of cousin of mine." Was it the edition with Marcus Clarke's preface? And if so, did General Gordon realize that Marcus was a cousin of Sir Andrew's?

From 1875 to 1880 General Sir Andrew Clarke served on the council of the Viceroy of India. The Viceroy from 1876 to 1880 was Lord Lytton. He wrote poems under the name Owen Meredith, and was the son of the novelist Bulwer Lytton, whose literary dandyism the young Clarke had adopted. Arthur Patchett Martin writes that at some point Lord Lytton declared of *His*

Natural Life ‘that it so fascinated him that he could not lay it down until he had finished it’. Had Sir Andrew perhaps similarly presented a copy of his own cousin’s book to the Viceroy?

Sir Andrew certainly valued it highly, as Mackinnon recalls: ‘He thought so highly as to induce the Prince of Wales, when on his visit to India, at which time Sir Andrew was Minister of Public Works in that country, to read *His Natural Life*. The Prince did read the book, sitting up late one night to finish it, and was greatly struck by its powers, and expressed a desire to meet the author, who, he thought, ought to be in that intellectual centre – London.’ The Prince of Wales was in India from November 1875 to March 1876.



December 1876 Clarke received the agreed initial payment of £50. Catherine Bond comments in “‘Curse the Law!’”: ‘whether this was directly for the copyright remains open to interpretation.’ McLaren notes in ‘Richard Bentley and the publication of *His Natural Life*’ that it was the only payment he received, since sales of the three volume edition of the novel did not reach 750 copies in his lifetime. Ultimately Marian received £978. 3s. 1d. from Bentley’s twenty-nine issues, sales in due course exceeding 46,250 copies by the time Bentley was taken over by Macmillan in August 1897. Macmillan’s absorbed *His Natural Life* into their list, with an eighth and last edition in 1935. McLaren calculates ‘there were twelve printings of the Australian edition, with a total of 41,376 copies, of which 4002 were transferred for binding with Bentley English title-pages. The peak selling years were 1885 (3748 copies), 1886 (8351) and 1887 (4076), after which sales levelled out at approximately 2000 per annum until 1893 and then averaged 1000 copies per annum during the depression years of the mid 1890s.’

30 June 1876 *The Argus* reported: ‘Messrs Harper, of New York, have republished Mr Marcus Clarke’s *His Natural Life*, and spontaneously paid the author for the American copyright.’

Clarke wrote to Duffy, who was now Speaker in the Victorian parliament: ‘The *Boston Review* speaks very favourably of the book, and Harper, who has republished it, sends me £15. Why this curious sum I don’t know. I suppose it represents something in dollars – Harper’s conscience perhaps!

‘I hope that you will like the book better in its amended condition. I have I think followed your advice in all particulars.’

Clarke now tried to place a manuscript of his stories with an English publisher. In 1875, Heseltine notes, his friend from the Wimmera, N. Walter Swan, had published a collection in London with Chapman and Hall, *Tales of Australian Life*, three of which had originally appeared in *The Australasian*. Clarke wrote to Cyril Hopkins: ‘I do not want any coin for them, though of course if the publisher pays, so much the better; but I am preparing another novel and I want to keep my name up, as actors say, in the meantime. I offered the stories to Bentley but he refused them saying that he did not care for stories but would publish the novel. I fancy Sampson Low would do it. However, use your own judgement; I leave all things in your hands. You can, if you like, select some of the stories and try a magazine with them, though the fact of their having

appeared in an Australian paper may – I think *will* – be a bar to that. I am not particular as to the titles either so you can change *them* if you like. I think that “La Béguine” is the best story, but, however, do what you like with them *ad majorem Clericii gloriam*! I want the dedication to appear as Mrs Cashel Hoey took some pains to correct proofs of *His Natural Life* ...

‘Excuse the trouble I am giving you about the book but I know nobody in a literary way in London who would bother themselves about me except Mrs Cashel Hoey and I want to surprise her with the dedication.’

But no collection ever appeared in Britain.

22 April *The Argus* reported the annual demonstration of the Eight Hours Association. Dampier recited an address by Clarke which was received with applause. 11 May Patrick Moloney married Ellen, daughter of James Quirk of Carlton, at St Patrick’s Cathedral. 4 October 1876 *The Argus* announced: ‘Mr George Robertson has in the press a story by Mr Marcus Clarke, entitled *Two in the Bush; a Tale of the Bird-in-Hand*. The novelette, which deals with a peculiar and interesting phase of colonial life, will be published in November.’ But it never appeared. Nor did the new novel he was preparing, *Felix and Felicitas*, based on the hopeless romance with his wife’s sister, Rose. ‘You will wrestle it down, work it out in a book,’ Rose wrote to him. He tried. In 1876 he had the first six chapters set up in type, which survive in Mitchell Library. McLaren notes that 2 October sent a synopsis to F. F. Baillière. Bentley expressed interest in seeing it. 11 November *The Argus* reported: ‘Messrs Harper Brothers, of New York, have, by a communication received by this mail, made arrangements to purchase the advance sheets of Mr Marcus Clarke’s new novel, *Felix and Felicitas*, from the London publishers. The work will appear in England and America simultaneously.’ But it was never completed.

A play, *Reverses: A Comedy Drama* by Marcus Clarke also exists in incomplete page-proofs, printed by Clarson Massina, 1876, written in collaboration with Robert Whitworth. McLaren quotes a note by Samuel Simmons in a copy in the Mitchell Library: ‘Who would expect to find a work “almost complete” made into a printed book? Yet here it is printed and bound with a title-page which declares it to be copyright, but no word as to it being unfinished, and no explanation as to why it was put into print. One can only surmise that Clarke put the work into the printer’s hands intending to supply the concluding portion, and left the blanks under the headings for stage directions to be filled in by hand ...’ It was finally performed in 1979.



11 January 1877 Clarke wrote to Cyril Hopkins from the Public Library, Melbourne: ‘Your reproachful note has just arrived and galvanized me into writing. The “good news” that I had to tell you was merely that the *Daily Telegraph* people wrote to ask me what terms I would take to join their staff in London. I did not care to go – having interests here; but said I should require a free passage to London and an engagement of one thousand a year for five years. They have not replied to my letter so I suppose that they found the terms too high. Perhaps they were; but my income here is not less from all sources and I am beginning to look at the securing of a crust for

old age. When one is thirty-one and has five children, two of whom are girls, one begins to think seriously of the duties of life.

‘Now for some news about myself. I am Assistant Librarian at the Public Library. Duties: sit in the office and direct other people; order books etc. from 4 p.m. until 10 every day except Saturday, when I work from 10 a.m. until 9 p.m. thus getting from 9 p.m. on Saturday to 4 p.m. on Monday as holiday. That time I spend usually at a little property belonging to my cousin for whom I act as agent. He owns fifteen hundred acres near Melbourne on which I built a shooting-box of six rooms. There is a fine orchard and plenty of game at the place. Two or three people go with me and we spend the time pleasantly. I live at a place called Brighton – because, I suppose, it is on the sea beach, and have a reasonably comfortable house and garden running to the beach, a boat etc. The principal expense here is labour. I give my cook forty pounds a year, my nurse thirty-six, and my housemaid thirty pounds a year. My groom demands no less than fifty. All these people have to be fed.’

Cyril adds: ‘There follow various other particulars of his domestic expenditure, none of which, I have been assured, however, on the highest authority in such matters, were quite correct or reliable, although true in a general way. He disposed of this subject by saying in conclusion, “I am considered well off, am always in debt and contrive to live pleasantly.” It is useless to enlarge on this subject. He did *not* contrive to live pleasantly for his debts and worries eventually killed him. His letter continues: There is no society in Melbourne. Bankers, merchants and rich men of the “shoddy” class form the only society which can afford to entertain. The really nice people – the retired officers, stray doctors or barristers are not rich enough to return hospitalities and the squatters or sheep farmers live away on their stations. The city is hateful but I want to put in another ten years. By that time I ought to have been for at least five in receipt of eight hundred a year from my promotion to my chief’s place, and to be able to sell my land for increased value. It is quite possible I may never return home at all. I have so many luxuries here, pony-carriage for my wife, saddle-horses, small cutter etc. which I could never hope to have in England that I fear lest I should be discontented when I reached home.

‘My cousin, now Minister for Public Works in India, offered me a billet in that service but I declined it for somewhat the same reasons. In fact, my dear Cyril, I am growing lazy. *Ich habe gewonnen* etc. I have tasted most things and am not so eager for violent emotions as of old.

‘I should much like to see you again. Not with mutual wives and children because that would be embarrassing and restraining but to meet you – say by accident – in a solitary railway carriage between London and Carlisle – have our fill of talk and then get out and each go our separate ways. Ah me, dear boy; that vanished youth of ours in the Highgate fields – we can never recall it!

‘Always yours,

‘Marcus Clarke.

‘A few days later he added a couple of sheets of a more intimate character, one passage of which however I shall cite as affording an additional proof of the strong hold the associations of early life had retained on his memory: I bought at a bookshop the other day a complete set of

Once a Week, and as I turned over the leaves, I recalled how we used to look for the weekly issues and devour the thrilling stories in them such as *The Pythagorean*, etc.

‘Finally came a postscript; a significant one: How did you like *His Un-Natural Life*? I mean *really* you know? (The word “really” strongly underlined.) “Tell me in thy reply!”’

Sir Andrew Clarke’s property was at Cheltenham. Maurice Brodzky, quoted by A. G. Stephens in *The Bulletin*, 18 August 1904, recalled: ‘Cheltenham was then “in the bush,” as the railway terminus was at Brighton. Clarke, of course had to be in town daily, and in a very short time his old habits seized upon him. Waxman, the money-lender, was carrying on business in Swanston Street, opposite the Library, and if Clarke was able to borrow ten pounds from the good-natured Waxman, who had a very high regard for clever literary men, Clarke would have dinner in town. On such an occasion it meant “a night out,” as there was no possibility of getting a cab for a reasonable fare to Cheltenham after midnight ...’

As for taking up a billet in India, Marcus seems not to have been tempted. His friend Walstab had spent time there; so had Marcus’s uncle, Sir Andrew, and Adam Lindsay Gordon’s father. But not Marcus.



Henniker Heaton wrote in his entry on Clarke in the *Australian Dictionary of Dates* in 1879: ‘In 1876 he was appointed Assistant Librarian of the Public Library, and has since ceased in a great measure his contributions to literature.’

It was an observation made by a number of his contemporaries. But in fact Clarke continued to write and publish journalism, plays and books prolifically. At the same time he was active in public life. 27 January 1876, *The Argus* reported on his election to the committee of the Melbourne Athenæum, the former Mechanics’ Institute, and he was involved in cataloguing its library. 13 February 1877 *The Argus* reported: ‘The new catalogue of the library was laid on the table by the secretary, and a vote of thanks was passed by the committee to Mr Marcus Clarke for his services in connexion with the compilation of it.’ 6 March 1877 it reported on his election as chairman of the library committee of the Melbourne Athenæum.

The Argus also reported Clarke’s attendance at committee meetings of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, 24 November 1877 and 22 November and 22 December 1878, and on 21 March 1878 his initiation of a prosecution on behalf of the society. 27 March 1878 it announced his appointment to the committee of inquiry into the outbreak at the Jika Reformatory for boys. He is a co-signatory of the report, with John James and Robert McGregor, dated 15 May 1878, and contributed a submission printed in the appendix.

8 February 1877 *The Argus* reported: ‘Mr Marcus Clarke’s novel *His Natural Life*, lately issued in London by Bentley and Son, has been translated into German under the title of *Deportirt auf Lebenszeit*, and published in Berlin by the well-known house of Otto Janke.’

Three new books by Clarke were published in 1877. Two were published by A. H. Massina & Co., as Clarson & Massina was now called after being reconstituted the previous year. They were

his short *jeu d'esprit*, *The Future Australian Race*, which attracted widespread notice, and his second collection of short stories, *Four Stories High*. *Four Stories High* had a plain, typographic cover, eighty pages, and sold for one shilling. It was dedicated to William Saurin Lyster. That year, 1877, Lyster presented *Lohengrin*, the first stage performance of an opera by Wagner in Australia.

The stories had all appeared originally in *The Australasian* between 1871 and 1873. But there is no need to assume that Clarke was producing nothing new and merely gathering together the old. Collections of stories are rarely easy to get published, and it may have taken Clarke a while to find a publisher willing to take a risk. It is not clear if this was the same collection that he had asked Cyril to try and get published in England, though the inclusion of stories with English episodes might suggest that it was. The emphasis is on range and variety of theme and setting, both Australian and cosmopolitan, comic and tragic. 'The Romance of Lively Creek' is set up-country with a cast of international adventurers, 'La Béguine' in London and Paris, 'The Poor Artist' in Melbourne, 'King Billy's Breeches', a satire about unproductive, self-serving bureaucracy in the handling of indigenous affairs, is set in the Wimmera, Melbourne and London. Clarke provided a new, unifying connective tissue of dialogue amongst friends in which, like a miniature *Canterbury Tales*, the stories are set.

In the English system of counting, four storeys of a house meant five floors – a ground floor and the four stories above – and Clarke included an untitled fifth piece. It was a witty play on words but, in understating the number of stories included rather than proclaiming five for the price of four, Clarke once again showed that he was not a businessman. The bonus fifth offering was 'The Acclimatised Sparrow'. It had been published not only in *The Australasian*, but in the final issue of the *Colonial Monthly*, and in the *Australian Journal* to make up for a missing episode of *His Natural Life*.

The collection may have been pitched at the Christmas market. Clarke makes dismissive mention of Christmas annuals in the introductory dialogue, but nonetheless he contributed to Garnet Walsh's *Hash: A Mixed Dish for Christmas, with ingredients by various Australian Authors*, and to Julian Thomas's *The Vagabond Annual*, both published that same year. The Christmas market was significant for the book trade, and Christmas annuals were an opportunity for a freelance writer. Clarke contributed to the first *Williams's Illustrated Australian Annual for Christmas and the New Year 1868–9*, to Massina's *Christmas Annual* for 1880, and to *The Australian Christmas Box: a Series of Stories* by Marcus Clarke, Grosvenor Bunster, Garnet Walch, Donald Cameron, Herr Scalper, Robert Whitworth, and Waif Wander, published by Cameron, Laing. He is also named as editor of *We 5. A Book for the Season*, with contributions from Walstab, Bunster, Frank W. Fenton, O. S. Wheeler and H. Collier, published by W. Calvert, though his name was omitted from the second edition.

The same year, 1877, F. F. Baillière published the *History of the Continent of Australia and the Island of Tasmania (1787 to 1870) for the use of Schools* edited by Marcus Clarke. Its 320 pages consisted of 365 numbered entries, arranged chronologically, of dates, data and events. Mackinnon writes: ‘At the suggestion of the then Minister for Education, the late Mr Justice Wilberforce Stephen, he was engaged to write a history of Australia for the state schools, which had just come under the new, secular, compulsory, and free, Education Act. This work entailed upon the writer more routine labour than was to his taste, and consequently, instead of devoting himself to the somewhat tedious task, he, after commencing the book, handed it over, in his usual, good-hearted way, to some impecunious friends, who did not possess the necessary qualification for such work, the consequence being that the book turned out to be a miserable *fiasco*, and was never used in the schools for which it was intended.’

A note at the end of Clarke’s preface declares: ‘The compiler desires to acknowledge the valuable assistance he has received from Mr J. J. Shillinglaw and Mr R. P. Whitworth, in the collection of literary materials and the selection and arrangement of facts.’

Clarke’s friends may have been impecunious and Bohemian, but they were not without knowledge or qualifications or literary expertise. Whitworth did much of the detailed work on Baillière’s Post Office Directories and Gazetteers for Victoria, South Australia and New South Wales. Shillinglaw was a Fellow of the Royal Geographic Society, of which his father had been librarian, and his books include *Commercial Statistics of Melbourne* (1857), *The Australian Shipmaster’s Guide* (1858), and *Historical Records of Port Phillip* (1879).

McLaren writes: ‘Baillière had great difficulty in obtaining the manuscript and the position was complicated by Clarke borrowing money and joining Shillinglaw in his promissory notes. In the end Clarke took out a summons against Shillinglaw but the matter was settled out of court.’

The *History* was widely reviewed, and its inaccuracies widely remarked upon. The *South Australian Register* concluded, 5 February 1878: ‘To the general reader, and especially to the intelligent reader who knows something about Australian history, but is not *au fait* with its details, the book will be of great service; but it will require careful revision before it can be accepted as a standard work suitable for the school instruction of the rising generation.’

6 March 1878 *The Brisbane Courier*’s Melbourne letter reported: ‘Two rival school histories of Australia have just come out, the one by Mr Marcus Clarke, and the other by two young men named Sutherland, who are making themselves famous as teachers of a Grammar School. The preference is given by the critics to the second history, on the score of greater accuracy in respect of details. But Mr Clarke’s history has the advantage of being the Government School book, and was written expressly to order of the Minister of Public Instruction, so that it is the more profitable “job” of the two.’

Clarke’s *History* was eclipsed by the Sutherlands’ volume, published by George Robertson. Holroyd writes: ‘A *History of Australia*, by the scholarly brothers Alexander and George Sutherland, filled a gap when published in 1877; it sold 120,000 copies in the next fifteen years – a huge quantity in those days. It was marketed in Britain by Longmans, who took over the publication entirely in the late nineties. It was to remain in their catalogue for some thirty years.’



For a while Clarke was one of those privileged gentlemen with both a city residence and a country property, like Massina with a country home at Wanding, Lyster with Fern Tree Gully, and Sir Redmond Barry, who, Galbally records, had his Sabine farm, as he called it after Horace, at Syndal east of Melbourne, and an adjacent property for his mistress at St John's Wood. Clarke involved himself in local matters. 12 February 1877 *The Argus* reported: 'A public meeting of the residents of the shire of Moorabbin interested in the formation of the Centre Dandenong Road was held on Thursday evening at Etheredge's Exchange Hotel, Cheltenham, Mr Thomas Attenborough in the chair. The chairman stated that the meeting had been called in consequence of a letter addressed by Mr Marcus Clarke to the shire council of Moorabbin, and the reply received thereto. Mr Marcus Clarke said that he had written to the council requesting them to set aside a sum to repair the Centre Dandenong road, leading from Cheltenham to Dandenong, and that the council had promised to do their best to meet the wishes of the residents along the road, provided that the residents themselves subscribed to assist the council, who had not sufficient funds in hand for the purpose. Mr Clarke pointed out the advantages to be gained by the establishment of a good road, and asserted that any money subscribed would be indirectly recouped in the first year by the lessened cost of carriage. On behalf of Sir Andrew Clarke, the owner of property in the district, he handed in a cheque for 20 guineas.'

However, Mackinnon writes, 'paradoxical as this statement may appear, it is nevertheless too true that the confidence placed by Sir Andrew Clarke in his cousin's ability to act as his sole and unchecked agent in business matters, was one of the most fatal though amiable errors ever committed, both for the principal and the agent. For the former it meant heavy pecuniary loss, for the latter neglect of all literary work, and being "got at," to use a vulgar phrase, while playing the role of the landed proprietor. In other words, a ridiculously large amount of money was expended upon the land in question, taking into account its intrinsic value, and, moreover, was expended in a most foolish way regardless of results. That Marcus Clarke was altogether to blame for the "mixed" condition into which the business affairs of Sir Andrew Clarke got is simply absurd. All that can be urged against him in the matter is that he was negligent and thoughtless in connection with them, as he had always been with his own, and, what is not generally known, as easily misled, through an excess of foolish vanity which imagined itself capable of understanding and accomplishing all things. However, the less said the better in connection with this episode of the brilliant *litterateur's* life, for, after all, it was not his fault but misfortune, as he has said himself, that he was not a business man. Indeed, no reference would have been made to this matter were it not that it was the greatest misfortune that ever happened to Marcus Clarke that he had anything to do with business, as it not only led him to abandon for a time his proper duties, but led him, also, deeper into the clutches of usurers, who eventually wrought him to death before his time.'

The good times were coming to an end. Sir Andrew did not renew Clarke's power of attorney in 1877. Clarke left Brighton and moved to St Kilda.



In 1877 Clarke began writing for *The Age* and its weekly companion, *The Leader*. He could take satisfaction in the fact that he was now reaching a much larger audience, the liberal *Age* having outstripped the conservative *Argus*, rising from a circulation of 2000 in the early 1860s to about 40,000, some four times that of *The Argus* now, and reaching 100,000 by the 1880s. *The Age* was edited by David Syme. Veitch outlines his career and policies in *David Syme: The Quiet Revolutionary*. David's elder brother Ebenezer Syme, born in Scotland in 1826, had worked for John Chapman, the publisher of the *Westminster Review*, and had been a friend and associate of George Henry Lewes and George Eliot, the radical George Holyoake, and Horace Greeley, the founder of the *New Yorker*. Ebenezer arrived in Melbourne in 1854 and worked for a while on *The Argus* before joining *The Age*, founded that year, as a leader writer. By 1856 he had become its sole proprietor. His brother David, born in 1828, joined him as a partner in 1856 and, after Ebenezer's death from tuberculosis in 1860, took control of the paper.

In a piece for the London *Daily Telegraph*, 6 September 1877, Clarke analysed the current state of *The Argus* on which he had begun his career, and *The Age*, with which he was now associated: 'It has been said that the history of two newspapers – *The Argus* and *The Age* – is the political history of Victoria. The two journals, in fact, resume and explain the struggle between the two classes of Australian settlers – people who want to live in the country, and those people who want to make their living out of it. *The Argus* is the organ of the importers of slop goods, of the large landholding absentees, of the shopkeepers who think that they are gentlemen because they sell their goods by the ton instead of by the pound weight. *The Age* represents the manufacturers, the small shopkeepers who are proud of their business, the makers of woollen cloth, the selectors of the land, the farmers, the boot-makers – in a word, the people of the colony. *The Argus* is conservative, has free-trade principles, and affects a taste for poetry and painting. *The Age* is liberal, advocates protection of native industry, and devotes a paragraph to a picture, and a column to a cooking stove. *The Argus* sells at 3d., *The Age* at 1d. *The Argus* has its London letter, and retails what purports to be the gossip of the clubs. *The Age* has its travelling correspondent in America, and rejoices in pointing out that democratic institutions are gradually reducing the privileges of the aristocracy. In the last election *The Argus* supported everybody who lost a seat, while *The Age* not only returned its men, but sent in two writers on its own staff. Perhaps some explanation of the relative positions which the two papers occupy may be found in the fact that the principal proprietor of *The Argus* is a benevolent gentleman who lives at Hayes in Kent; while the principal proprietor of *The Age* is an energetic person who has a small suburban farm, and is usually to be found editing his own paper in a little den behind the printing office. For texture of paper, reviews of English books, and particulars of the last painting of M. Alma Tadema, one prefers *The Argus*. For news of the place one lives in, sharp advocacy of social reforms, and vigorous attacks upon political and municipal shortcomings, one reads *The Age* only; and, as such matters as land tenure, drainage, harbour works and railways seem of more

importance to a fifty years' old colony than the works of M. Alma Tadema, it follows that *The Age* is the more influential paper of the two. Indeed, it is remarkable that whenever the conservative organ has cordially supported a local politician the unhappy gentleman lost the confidence of the country immediately.'

Walter Murdoch in his memoir of Alfred Deakin summed up David Syme: 'Unimaginative, without a gleam of humour or hint of romance, he regarded poetry as the merest moonshine and novels as repositories of falsehood.' According to Murdoch, Syme discouraged the young Deakin's literary aspirations in 1878 by telling him *The Age* offered no real market for anything but politics. Nonetheless, Clarke managed to find a niche in the companion weekly *Leader* for his own literary talents, and Deakin succeeded Syme's brother George as its editor in 1880.



Mackinnon writes of Clarke's political journalism: 'It was at this time he first became a contributor to those journals which he had been wont to attack with his caustic pen, as the freelance of *The Argus* – namely *The Age* and *Leader*. And his connection with these journals lasted up to the time of his death, having gone through the trying ordeal incident upon *The Age* cum Berry Reform Agitation of 1877, 78, 79, into which he threw himself with all the zest of a thorough hater of Shoddocracy, writing some of the most telling articles which illumined the pages of *The Age* and *Leader* at that time. And he fought the more zealously in the fray, because he wrote under the editorial guidance of one upon whom he looked as, at once, the best read and the ablest journalist on the Australian press – Mr A. L. Windsor. He also contributed, besides leaders to *The Age*, and reviews to *The Leader*, the satirical column in the latter paper purporting to be written by "Atticus." And while at this, to him, congenial work of denouncing the privileged classes of the community with all the invective at his command, he was in confidential communication on political subjects with the then Speaker of the Assembly, Sir Charles Gavan Duffy; and many a Sunday was passed at Sorrento by the writer and the politician, who was in reality the moving spring of all the agitation that culminated in that inhuman act – the Black Wednesday dismissals.'

The radical Berry ministry was in deadlock with the conservative upper house which refused to renew the order authorizing payment for members of parliament. Payment of parliamentarians had been a demand of the Chartists, an attempt to make it possible for workingmen to enter politics. The bill for paying members was attached to the Appropriation Bill, which the upper house refused to pass, so that the government was without funds to pay salaries. 8 January 1878 the government acted in retaliation, purging the civil service and judiciary of many supporters of the conservatives. The day became known as Black Wednesday.

Alfred Deakin recalled in *The Crisis in Victorian Politics, 1879–1881*: 'What the Government did was to announce that in consequence of the stoppage of supplies by the Council it was impossible for them to maintain a public service which was overmanned and in its higher ranks overpaid. Consequently without a word of warning a list of county court judges, police

magistrates and other civil servants were dismissed. The choice of persons discharged in the departments was left to individual ministers and but roughly revised by the cabinet. A few of those who were given the *cong  * were selected on the advice of their superiors because they were below the standard of competency or industry of their fellows, and a larger number because they occupied what were practically sinecures, but there were some who were picked because they were in receipt of high salaries and suspected of being in sympathy with the conservatives.’

The consequences were widespread. Turner records in his *History of Victoria*: ‘Capital as usual took the earliest alarm, mortgages were called up, property values depreciated with appalling suddenness, buyers held aloof, and many forced sales showed a fall of over fifty per cent within a few weeks.’

Captain Standish, the Chief Commissioner of Police, was one of the few who retained his job. John Sadleir in his *Recollections of a Victorian Police Officer* explained why: ‘A high officer of the state in those evil days, a man notoriously of unclean life, was found late at night under ambiguous circumstances on the private premises of a gentleman residing in one of the suburbs. The owner of the premises did not wait for an explanation. He took the law into his own hands and severely punished the intruder, finally kicking him out of the place. Partly to safeguard himself, this gentleman called early on the following day on the Chief Commissioner of Police, related the circumstances and sought advice as to what proceedings he should take. Then followed such negotiations and interventions of friends as might have been expected, with the result that the matter was hushed up. The high official recognized, of course, that it was the intervention of the head of the police service that saved the situation. It saved also the police department, for when the schedule for the disbanding of the service came before him he promptly vetoed it.’

Frank Myers recalled Clarke’s view of Black Wednesday in *The Bulletin*, 26 November 1903: ‘One letter I remember. It told the only bit of wholesome truth at the time when “all that is respectable” in Melbourne was raging furiously about “Black Wednesday,” so called. It occurred to Clarke to ask the ragers why they had not protested on the occasion of other wholesale retrenchments? If the sufferings of the “curled darlings,” who should have substantial savings, and assuredly had many friends, were so poignantly felt, “what of the fettlers, railway porters, junior clerks or labourers sacked by the hundred often enough? And often enough, too, with the store account closed, the bailiff shadowing the landlord, half a dozen children on the floor, and a wife most unaesthetically near her confinement?”’

Possibly sobered by the economic consequences of the events, 17 January 1878 Clarke made a will, witnessed by John Charles Turner and John S. Woolcott, now in the Public Record Office, Melbourne.



Kendall was contributing regularly to the *Town and Country Journal* and *The Freeman’s Journal*. 17 November 1877 he reflected in *Freeman’s* on the fate of writers in Australia with an essay

‘Old Manuscripts’: ‘Here in an obscure backwood of the colony this article is being written by one who has left the fields of literature forever. It is an outcome, I hope, of no querulous spirit; but it is the work of a man whose disappointments and sufferings in the domain of letters were very intense. I do not wish to excuse sin by saying that affliction came before the days of sin. There is no attempt at palliation in the statement that I have earned my bread by labour, whose bitterness few people have any conception of. I know what it is to be a “literary hack.” And sitting as I do now, surrounded by the furniture of my new life – by the day-book, ledger and cash register of commerce – I do not forget that, prior to the days of “penny-a-lining,” I too was “in Arcadia.”’

Heseltine quotes a letter he wrote to Moore, 6 March 1878: ‘My *Freeman* squibs are not written by one with a passion for scribbling but rather by a poor devil who needs coin.’

For much of his work he used pseudonyms, not merely because of the political and contentious topics, but because he did not want to draw attention to his past identity. Nor to his family. 11 June 1878 the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported: ‘Melinda Kendall, 70, was found guilty of being an idle and disorderly person, having neither fixed abode nor lawful means of support, and was sentenced to be imprisoned two months.’

W. H. Wilde quotes a letter Kendall wrote to Halloran, 2 October 1878: ‘My past will not bear analysis and I always dread its being raked up.’ That year Halloran, aged sixty-seven, retired as Principal Under-Secretary and official head of the Colonial Secretary’s department after fifty-one years’ government service. Kendall published a poem ‘To Henry Halloran’ in the *Sydney University Magazine*, September 1878.

A. G. Stephens recorded in his *Bulletin* diary, 20 May 1896: ‘Holdsworth told several Kendall anecdotes: Once Holdsworth called to see Kendall at house of P. F. Fagan in Sydney (whose name appears in inscription to Kendall’s collected poems, George Robertson & Co., 1886). Found him in charge of servant – practical prisoner. Kendall wanted 1/-. Holdsworth gave him 2/6. Kendall eluded servant, Holdsworth followed him to three pubs – a drink in each – brought him home “absolutely flaccid.”

‘Again, at Camden Haven, N.S.W. – riding party. Kendall went forward on some errand – two or three miles further on Fagan stopped party (which included Mrs Kendall): “I’ll go forward and shift that log out of the way.” The log was Kendall, who had imbibed freely of roadside rum.’

In Henry Kendall: His Later Years Frederick Kendall recalls: ‘I remember the wine shop, conducted by a Mrs Logan and her two daughters, where from a stock of “Colonial wines” they catered for the indiscriminating palates of local rustics. When my father in one of his darker moods would adjourn to this resort it was only after the remonstrances and pleadings of his wife had failed to restrain him ... Such spasms were, however, not frequent. They would be followed by perhaps excited talk, then sleep and an ashamed awakening.’

Wendy Isaac notes of 20 Main Street, now Comboyne Street: ‘In 1875 John Logan built a wine shop on this site. A small room of this building was used as a post office, between 1876 and 1881, which was operated by Elizabeth and Jane Logan. The post office was closed on the 1st January 1881 after a request from Henry Kendall, who objected to the wine shanty being part of the

building from which it operated.’ The 2012 Kendall Community Centre brochure Kendall records that Henry ‘used his penmanship to write to the Post Master General lending support to the villagers’ request for a post office’. 1 January 1881 was the day Kendall moved from Camden Haven to Cundletown. The post office then found a home in Fagan’s new general store in Main Street, with Michael Fagan as postmaster. Fagan received £5 per annum as postmaster and £79 per annum for operating the mail pick-up and delivery service for the Camden Haven area.

Frederick notes that in addition to himself and Frank, born 15 January 1873, four more children were born to Kendall and Charlotte between 1877 and 1881. Kendall told McCrae, 19 August 1880: ‘I have five children – all young. These are three boys and two girls. The boys’ names are Clarence, Frank and Athelstan. The girls have been christened Persia and Roma.’ Frederick’s second name was Clarence. Another son, Orara, was born 19 June 1881 but died the following January.

Camden Haven was re-named Kendall in honour of the poet on 1 October 1891. In 2007 a granite statue by Dee Davis was erected in the Henry Kendall Memorial Park at Comboyne and Graham Streets, depicting Kendall seated on timber logs with a book in his hand. A mural showing images from Kendall’s poems was unveiled on the outside wall of the Henry Kendall Milk Bar in Comboyne Street in 1998. A Poet’s Walk has verses from Kendall and other poets affixed to power poles around the village. At Laurieton, six miles to the east, the Henry Kendall Reserve is situated on the shores of Stingray Creek.



A recollection of Kendall was recorded in *The Brisbane Courier*, 3 August 1882: ‘The writer spent a delightful and well remembered day in January, 1878, with good old Samuel Bennett (of the *Town and Country Journal*, Sydney) at his rural paradise on the sea coast, which domain includes that lovely inlet of the Pacific and the broken rivulet which falls into it, and known as Little Coogee Bay. This stream is clear as crystal, never fails in any drought, and leaps 8 ft. at a time into basins 5 ft. deep embowered in ferns and mosses. Old Mr Bennett (then so near his end by an untoward accident) showed no sign of failing vigour, and the way he leaped and clambered over the steep rocks of that vicinity would have shamed many a man fifteen years younger. But what has all this to do with Henry Kendall? Simply this, that the conversation that day turned chiefly on Rolf Boldrewood, Kendall, and other Australian writers of note. Mr Bennett knew Kendall well, and had a thorough appreciation of his genius and character, and ably described him to the writer of these lines as a rare combination of qualities; as a bushman, instinct with the keen perceptive nerve and eye of a black aboriginal, who has his name for every blade of grass, frond of fern and bank of moss, for every tree, rock, stream, and mountain; and with all that savage wood-lore deeply woven in his nature, Kendall was a white man, and a poet of high degree, as his works show. There are plenty of blackfellows, full of the weird superstition and the sylvan woodcraft that the wild bush imparts, but they cannot put it into poetic English; and there are poets, too, but “the bush” has never talked to them in its own language, nor revealed itself to them as it did to Kendall, for, to quote the graphic phrase of Mr Bennett to the writer on the

occasion referred to, Kendall was all the same as an “inspired blackfellow,” which two words give a clue to the mystic charm that breathes through his verses quite *sui generis*, and only faintly approached in point of being “racy of the boil” by Reginald Heber in India, and Pringle in South Africa, in their local poems. It may safely be predicted that no second Henry Kendall will, for a century at least, arise to fame in the old island continent, which has withstood the geologic shocks and changes which long since have metamorphosed the Southern Hemisphere and its rocks.’



The Hobart *Mercury* reported, 10 April 1878: ‘Mr Marcus Clarke has received a letter from M. Jules Verne, the eminent French author, in which he mentions his intention of visiting Stawell at an early date.’

17 May *The Argus* reported: ‘It being known that Mr W. S. Lyster, the well-known impresario, who for 17 years has supplied the Victorian public with opera, is compelled to visit Europe on account of ill-health, a few of his friends met together yesterday to devise the best means of presenting him with some pleasant testimonial of their esteem, of his private worth, and appreciation of his labours on behalf of the musical public. Captain Standish was in the chair, and Clarke and Herbert Power were amongst those present.’

19 June *The Argus* reported: ‘A rumour was current in town yesterday that a serious accident had happened to Mr Marcus Clarke, but the report proved to have been exaggerated. It appears that on Monday evening Mr Clarke was returning from Cheltenham, and when about a mile from the Plough and Harrow Hotel, he was met by a market cart, which came in contact with the wheel of Mr Clarke’s buggy, smashing it, and capsizing the buggy. Mr Clarke was thrown out on his head, and received a nasty cut, which rendered him insensible. The driver of the market cart did not stop to see what mischief had been done, for when Mr Clarke recovered consciousness, he was alone. He managed to walk to the hotel, where he procured assistance. Beyond the cut on his head and a rather severe shaking, Mr Clarke sustained no injury.’

24 June *The Age* reported at length on an amazing scientific development. The item was reprinted in *The Brisbane Courier* and *The Queenslander*: ‘The tele-gastrograph is a machine by which, through the aid of electric currents, the flavour of any food or liquor can be transmitted by wire to any distance, and the sensation of eating or drinking conveyed by merely placing the end of the wire between the teeth. The inventor never pretended that any actual nourishment was conveyed by his process. He merely claimed that the sensation of partaking of rich viands and costly wines could be imparted to people a hundred miles away from the operator – written on their palates, in fact; and that the number who could receive this sensation from a small quantity of food, and the length of time that it could be made to last, were practically unlimited; and after the experiments of last night all doubt as to the correctness of his calculations is at an end. The private trials of his machine on a small scale within the last few weeks satisfied all who witnessed them; but at the request of the inventor public notice was withheld till he had perfected his arrangements so as to give the world an opportunity of judging for itself. It was arranged that at 8 o’clock yesterday evening the experiments were to commence. The machine was worked at the

Victoria Club, and a number of well-known gentlemen kindly gave their services to assist the operator. Messrs Ellery and S. W. M'Gowan took charge of the electric battery. Mr Butters, Mr Sayers, the well-known professor of cookery, Mr Hay, of the Athenæum Club, and Mr Phipps, of Clement's Café, undertook to see that the soups and food were properly cooked and were kept hot. Dr Bleasdale and Sir Redmond Barry looked after the wines, and Judge Cope and Mr Gatehouse after the beer and spirits; while Mr George Kirk, Mr Reginald Bright, and Captain Standish were in readiness to supervise the arrangements for sending a sensation of cigar smoke along the wire after the dinner was disposed of.'

It was another of Clarke's inventive spoofs. 'The credit of inventing the tele-gastrograph is solely and entirely due to a gentleman who has been for some years connected with the literary department of this paper,' *The Age* explained.

13 September 1878 Richard Bentley in London issued a new, single volume, six shilling edition of *His Natural Life*. Two thousand and fourteen copies were printed, of which 1,250 were issued as number 70 in the series Bentley's Favourite Novels, and 764 sent to Australia with George Robertson's imprint on the title page alongside Bentley's. In 'English Publication of Australian Novels' Hergenhan notes that it sold slowly and 11 December 1879 B. Cousens of Bentley's wrote to J. W. Skerry, the solicitor acting for Baillière on the rights of Clarke's novel: 'We are sorry that there should have been any appearance of delay in communication with you on the matter of the publication of *His Natural Life*.

'We have looked into the accounts and find that the proceeds of the 6/- edition are not favourable.

'As we purchased the right of publication in this country we do not think under the circumstances of a new edition resulting *in a loss* that we can reconsider the amount paid for the work, as we might have been disposed to do if the publication had been a success.'

Two years later Bentley's wrote to Clarke's solicitor, John S. Woolcott, 2 December 1881: 'It did not meet with such popularity in that form as we had reason to anticipate and when an enquiry was made on the subject two years ago, we had then to report that the work had not even paid the expenses of its reprint. This it has now done ...'



The young writer Victor Daley, born in Ireland in 1858, recorded in *The Bulletin*, 24 September 1904, being invited by Clarke in the late seventies for a meal at a Collins Street hotel 'where pressmen of the first flight used to congregate':

'We took some sherry and bitters to give us an appetite for the banquet. Then he looked at me with amazed blue-grey luminous eyes, and said, "I have no money!"

'Daley had none either. "No dinner!" he said. But Clarke was not so easily defeated.

"That's all right," he remarked cheerfully, "we'll go up and see George Ashton."

"Dire necessity, George!" he explained as he borrowed a sovereign.'

But as soon as there was money Clarke forgot about the dinner and ordered a bottle of champagne. Just as it was being poured, Ashton himself came into the hotel.

“Dire necessity, Marcus?” Ashton asked drily.

“Dire necessity,” Clarke replied. “Join us.”

Daley also recalled visiting Clarke at his house in St Kilda: ‘There was nothing in the place to indicate the tastes of the tenant. Some books, of course, but none that was rare. This was not because he was not fond of books, but because he lived in the company of thousands of them in the Public Library.’ And because Clarke’s own library had been sold when he went bankrupt.

Clarke had become increasingly jaundiced about the bourgeois world in general. Arthur Patchett Martin recalled in *Temple Bar*: ‘It seemed to me, who knew him well at this period, that he had a grudge against respectable society, or what is called respectable in an age when more than ever “the learned pate ducks to the golden fool,” and when the bank balance has too much become the barometer of human worth.’ Martin added: ‘Marcus Clarke was essentially a gentleman, and had neither the virtues nor the narrowness of the *bourgeoisie*. To him it was pleasant, if the fancy took him, to lounge into a café or a club-room in the busiest part of the day; but perhaps the well-to-do trader who, hurrying past, noticed his dreadful waste of time, did not give him credit for often working far into the night.’

Henry Gyles Turner recalled in *Once a Month* in 1885: ‘This inability to estimate at their proper value such qualities as frugality or prudential forethought was not removed by experience, and at last, like many people before him, he came to look upon people who practised self-denial and acquired property with a certain feeling of dislike and contempt. Hence, though always humorously cynical, he became in later years bitterly caustic in his fanciful comments on the smug world, which makes up the majority of our fellow creatures, and his radicalism was very red.’

Turner amplified his observations in Turner and Sutherland: ‘While the brunt of his attacks had chiefly to be borne by the well-to-do and smugly complacent – especially that class that measures everything by a monetary standard – some of his keenest satire is aimed at that *laissez faire* Bohemianism which was the cause of all his troubles.’

Turner continued further: ‘In his often-expressed contempt for and pretended inability to understand “business,” he vents his severest irony on business men, and it was towards the well-to-do of that class, who believed in attending to their own affairs, that he presented his most aggressive side. Not content with the favourite Bohemian denunciation of philistinism, he always affected to see in success in life the spoliation of someone else, some victim to be pitied. “A man of business,” says one of his heroes in *Four Stories High*, “is one who becomes possessed of other people’s money without bringing himself within the purview of the law.”’

Clarke was not alone in these beliefs. His admired Balzac observed in *Le Père Goriot*: ‘*Le secret des grandes fortunes sans cause apparente est un crime oublié, parce qu’il a été proprement fait.*’ ‘The secret of great fortunes without apparent cause is a crime forgotten, for it was properly done.’

Turner added his observations on Clarke's politics: 'With all his many-sidedness as a writer, he had a singular ineptitude for politics. To use his own reckless words, there was nothing he despised so much as protection, unless it was free trade! Judged by his Buncle correspondence, Peripatetic Philosopher, and kindred papers, he seemed to think that politicians as a class passed their time in posturing to the masses, and that the element of personal advantage was the great motive power. His frank avowal of this conviction that corruption was rampant in every department of the State, often found its way into print, notwithstanding the watchful supervision of editors, whose seats he contrived to make more than usually thorny.'

Rather than as singular ineptitude, this might be seen as further evidence of Clarke's 'very red' radicalism remarked on earlier, albeit of a cynical, pessimistic cast. Frank Myers recalled in *The Bulletin*, 26 November 1903: 'His knife was into the old Conservative party through all his later days. They were of no use to him and had not much use for him, when troubles gathered, as they did.'

Kendall expressed similar views on politicians in 'Jones – a Biography – by The Mopoke' in *The Freeman's Journal*, 19 October 1880: 'Our hero placed himself under the wing of that distinguished gentleman, Mr Sheridan Moore ... many things were learned; including that leading truth in mineralogy, that *brass*, not gold, is the most valuable of metals. "Look here, Jones," observed the ineffable Sherry, "You take my advice and stick to one furrow. You have no brains, my boy – we'll take that for granted; but then, you have coin; and if you want to be a big man your path is as plain as the purple on my nose. *Your 'dart' is Parliament; and in order to work into that illustrious shop, you must knock round every corner – mount every possible stump, and pitch up your voice in every backdoor taproom, and at every hole-and-corner meeting. It is probable that you will have nothing to say; but, by all means, say it. Then as good society is necessary in the matter, tip the big wigs, and – there you are.*"'

As for Adam Lindsay Gordon, he had experienced eighteen months of political life when elected to the South Australian parliament. John Riddoch recalled in *The Advertiser*, 19 August 1895: 'he did not find the political atmosphere particularly congenial.'



December 1878 Clarke was offered the parliamentary librarianship. Elliott records that Sir Redmond Barry wrote to him: 'My advice is to accept the offer without hesitation and accept my hearty congratulations on your honourable advancement to an offer more valuable than that you occupy both immediately and prospectively.' Barry added a postscript: 'I do not approve of your being solicited privately to leave us without direct communication with the Trustees. But will not object on that account.' Mackinnon records: 'It was through the friendship then existing between Sir Charles Gavan Duffy and Marcus Clarke, that the latter was offered by Mr Graham Berry, in December, 1878, the Librarianship of the Parliamentary Library, which, however, Clarke declined to accept, believing that he would, on the retirement of Mr Sheffield, his senior in the Public Library, then imminent, owing to age, receive that post. But in this hope he was doomed to

disappointment ...’ As well as Duffy’s support, Mackinnon adds in the *Austral Edition*: ‘It was during this period he enjoyed the friendship and confidence of the then Governor of Victoria, Sir George Bowen.’

And now, after almost a five year break, he returned to the theatre, collaborating with Henry Keiley, the opera critic for *The Argus* and *The Australasian*, on *Alfred the Great: A Dramatic & Musical Fancy*. The musical director was Alfred Plumpton and William Lyster’s brother Fred contributed a song. First produced by Joseph Aarons, 24 December 1878, it was a success, Clarke’s greatest success, indeed, running at the Academy of Music for thirty-five performances. Though it had its critics. The Victorian correspondent of *The Brisbane Courier* remarked, 3 January: ‘I was not present, but I found on Christmas morning a nipping review of the piece in *The Argus*. The critic reviews it as a keen, frosty wind reviews a line of apple trees in full blossom. The criticism is a model of keen, caustic, depreciatory writing. I shall see the piece, however, and judge for myself.’

12 February *The Argus* reported on plans for a Melbourne cemetery at Springvale, on the Dandenong road: ‘The offer of one site plainly showed that it was quite possible offers might be made of others equally suitable, and shortly afterwards an offer was made by Mr Marcus Clarke of another piece of land, also on the Dandenong road, but on the opposite side of the road to the Springvale site. This offered land was also visited and although it was sandy on the surface, yet one foot below it was found that there was a good solid clay subsoil, which would be most suitable for interment purposes.’

19 February a banquet was given for the departure of the Governor, Sir George Bowen and his wife, Roma Diamantina di Roma. *The Argus* reported, 20 February: ‘The place of honour on the musical programme was given to a new song composed by Alfred Plumpton on words written by Marcus Clarke, “Victoria’s Farewell to Lady Bowen.” The song was sung by Mr S. Lambie and the accompaniment was played by Madame Carlotta Tosca. It was repeated by request later in the evening ... The words are written in the poetic spirit of valediction, and while they confess the absence of Australian myth and those graces of old tradition which make sacred the land of Lady Bowen’s birth, they suggest our bright Austral days to remind her of her native air, and hope that final rest may come as calmly as night in her own Grecian land. The music is a happy reflex of the sentiment embodied in the words ...’

8 April *The Argus* reported on the monthly meeting of the Melbourne Athenæum: ‘A letter was received from Mr Marcus Clarke, stating that he had been unable to attend recent meetings of the committee and that the cause of his non attendance was indisposition. Mr Clarke’s seat was declared vacant for non attendance in accordance with one of the rules.’

And now he found himself involved in the first of a series of troublesome issues. 10 April 1879 the minutes of a meeting of the trustees of the Melbourne Public Library record: ‘Mr Clarke the sub-librarian attended. He was asked if he had any remarks to offer with respect to the contents of an anonymous letter which had been published in the *Daily Telegraph* newspaper a copy of which letter had been sent to the president and by his direction forwarded to Mr Clarke.’

‘Mr Clarke said that it was not true that he had written articles for a certain newspaper calumniating public men and lampooning his private and personal enemies, but did not deny that he had written matter which had been published to which he had not signed his name.

‘He was then informed that when he was appointed to the post he had pledged himself to the committee not to write for or publish in the press unless he signed his name to what he wrote; that it was essential to the well-being of the institution that its officers should abstain from writing in the press anything calculated to give offence by political or personal allusion to parties or individuals and that the committee would not permit him to violate the pledge he had given.

‘He was further informed that a complaint had been made of his having supplied to *The Age* newspaper intelligence of the receipt of certain books by the committee which intelligence had not been imparted to the other newspapers and that the exclusive supply to that newspaper was considered to be a grievance.

‘He explained that the intelligence in question had not been supplied by him to *The Age* but had been obtained from him in the course of a conversation with a reporter of that newspaper who on a visit to the library had amongst his enquiries asked as to the nature of books recently received.

‘The committee accepted this explanation and informed him that no intelligence relating to the affairs of the institution was to be given to any newspapers except by their direction: that their orders were that all the newspapers should be dealt with impartially and without preference or favour of anyone in particular.’

Clarke continued to produce a substantial amount of newspaper work. A diary for 1879–81 recording his journalistic earnings is preserved in the State Library of Victoria and printed in McLaren’s bibliography. It consists of brief titles of articles written and submitted, with the payment received, along with his debts to Goldstein, Waxman and his grocer. Income ranged from seven shillings and sixpence for a paragraph to £4 for an article on Beaconsfield’s novels. He was contributing from six to twelve items a month to *The Age*, *Leader*, *London Daily Telegraph*, and *Sydney Morning Herald*. They included leaders, ‘Under the Verandah’ columns, and features on a range of topics from the Kelly gang, Captain Moonlight, Chinese labour, education, and the history of *The Argus*, to Melbourne restaurants, the board of health, punt shooting, cruelty to animals, gout and divorce.



Moore, Holdsworth, Halloran, and Dalley tried to draw Kendall back into the literary world. He had his reservations. But he published a poem on the proprietor of the *Sydney Morning Herald*, ‘In memory of John Fairfax,’ in *Sydney Once a Week*, 23 February 1878, and a tribute to Dalley, ‘William Bede Dalley’, *The Freeman’s Journal*, 24 August 1878. James Tyrrell quotes a letter he wrote to W. H. Traill, 15 February 1879: ‘Dalley is about to publish his brilliant, but rather florid lecture in pamphlet form. He has applied to me for a poem on “Spanish Cathedrals,” to be printed with the lecture. I have written it, and think you will like it. With regard to Dalley, I am not

exactly an “iconoclast,” I merely object to his cant about culture. He is a brilliant fellow, but certainly not a genius. The peroration of his recent delivery is beautiful; but the rest of the thing is marred by mannerisms.

‘I hear that Sheridan Moore has been fishing up verses of mine and publishing them in his *mag* as original ... This is too bad for him. For obvious reasons I declined to contribute to his pages at the very start, and have stuck to my purpose ever since. Moore is sailing under false colours. He is emphatically a mountebank of the first water, still I have known him to do many kind things.’

‘On a Spanish cathedral’ appeared in *The Brisbane Courier* and *The Queenslander* on 19 June.

Apart from his reservations, Kendall complained, too, of lack of time to write. But in January 1879 he began contributing regularly to *The Sydney Mail*, the weekly companion paper to the *Sydney Morning Herald*. For the remainder of his life he continued to find a venue for his poetry and his prose there and in *The Freeman’s Journal* and the *Town and Country Journal*. Henniker Heaton, who had married Rose Bennett, commissioned the poet to write a tribute to her father Samuel Bennett, who had been proprietor of *The Empire*, *Evening News* and the *Town and Country Journal*; it appeared, as ‘By the Cliffs of the Sea’, in *The Freeman’s Journal*, 1 February 1879 and the *Town and Country Journal*, 7 June.

I knew him, indeed; and I knew,
 Having suffered so much in his day,
 What a beautiful nature and true
 In Bennett was hidden away.
 In the folds of a shame without end,
 When the lips of the scorner were curled,
 I found in this brother a friend –
 The last that was left in the world:
 Ah! under the surface austere
 Compassion was native to thee ...



William Bede Dalley and Thomas Butler encouraged Kendall to write a poem for the opening of the Sydney International Exhibition. 5 July 1879 the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported: ‘Several compositions in verse, to be set to music for the cantata of the opening day have been sent in, and from these the Ceremonial Committee selected an exquisite poem by Henry Kendall. The poet has consented to curtail it somewhat in order to bring it within the proportions which the musical setting rendered necessary; and the poem is now in the hands of Signor Giorza, who will no doubt render it the justice it merits and demands.’

The *Cantata written expressly for the opening ceremony of the Sydney International Exhibition* was published in *The Sydney Mail* on 22 February 1879. The Italian composer and conductor Giorza, who had been living in Australia since 1871, organized the musical entertainment for the exhibition in the Garden Palace in the Botanic Gardens, providing piano and organ recitals and

conducting the orchestra. P. A. Jennings, the commissioner for the exhibition, arranged for Kendall to provide a closing 'Hymn of Praise' as well.

In March the *Sydney Morning Herald* announced a prize of a hundred guineas for a poem to celebrate the Exhibition. There were 250 entries. Kendall entered and won. The *Herald* declared, 17 September: 'Mr Kendall who it need hardly be said has long been known as one of the first of Australian poets, is to be congratulated on his success in a competition which was open to all the world. This success has been made the more remarkable by the fact that some of the productions received, from the mother country especially, are marked by both poetic genius and scholarly taste.' Kendall's poem appeared in the *Herald* the day the exhibition opened, 17 September, and was reprinted in *The Sydney Mail*.

The opening of the exhibition was reported in *The Argus*, 18 September: 'As soon as the Governors had taken their seats on the dais the programme began with the cantata composed by Signor Giorza and written by Mr Kendall. It opened well and full effect was given to its stirring lines ... The audience awakened into excitement over the chorus by the 250 girls, and called for an encore. Signor Giorza turned round for a permissive nod from the Governor's private secretary, and on his receiving it, the chorus was repeated. The rendering of the cantata occupied a little over half an hour, and it was unanimously accepted as a success. The girls' chorus was a happy inspiration.'

18 September the *Herald* published a letter signed Penseroso: 'Sir, England has its Poet Laureate, why not Australia? We have the man in Henry Kendall ...'

25 September the *Herald* reported: 'Our readers will, no doubt, be glad to learn that Henry Kendall, the author of the Cantata sung at the opening of the Exhibition, has not been forgotten amidst the general rejoicings and congratulations incident to that occasion. Mr P. A. Jennings, the Executive Commissioner, has considerably thought of him, and has obtained for him the signatures of the Governors of New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, and Tasmania to a neat little compliment couched in the following terms: "The undersigned Governors of New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, and Tasmania, beg to express to Mr Kendall their approval of the Cantata written by him for the opening ceremony of the Sydney International Exhibition, set to music by Signor Giorza, and so admirably executed on that occasion. (Signed) Augustus Loftus, Normanby, William F. Drummond Jervois, Frederick A. Weld." Besides this, Mr Jennings has himself forwarded to the poet a copy of the programme of the musical performances of the opening ceremony, printed on satin, and having inscribed upon it the words, "With the best wishes and congratulations of P. A. Jennings, Executive Commissioner."'

27 September a special correspondent of *The Queenslander* declared 'the Australian poet, Mr Henry Kendall, *par excellence* the premier bard of the southern hemisphere ...' But its writer of 'Turf Notes' commented, 11 October: 'poor Henry Kendall ... that unhappy Exhibition poem, which reminds me more of a force-pump with a weak valve and lack of grease than of anything else ...'

7 June 1879 *The Freeman's Journal* published Kendall's satire the 'Gagging Bill'. He told Peter Fagan it was written in four hours at Butler's request, Reed records in his dissertation. It was an attack on an attempt by his old patron Sir Henry Parkes to strengthen the libel and defamation laws.

O hide for shame, ye foolish ones, and blind,
 Who made a ruler of a bag of wind!
 Who placed your freedom in the reach of sharks,
 And fell from Pericles to – Henry Parkes! ...

Is this your model ruler? – turn and shout
 Ye boobies, while I trot your idol out!
 Here is the man who on an evil date
 Was pitchforked hither through the devil's gate –
 Who crouched for years outside the social pale
 Nor showed his hoof, nor advertised his tail –
 Whose cunning seize upon the earliest chance
 When men were fooled by blatant utterance –
 Who crept to power in his peculiar mode
 And stuck at nothing on the nasty road –
 Who ran with every wind, and gained his ends
 By buying foes and sacrificing friends!

Parkes was deeply offended. Others were delighted. Ackland's biography quotes Heaton, the editor of the *Town and Country Journal*, asking Kendall, 24 June 1879: 'Will you send us one article every week, political or otherwise – and keep an eye on Parkes. He requires watching *severely*. Some of your social, political or descriptive articles may do for leaders.'

Some time in 1879 George Gordon McCrae got in touch with Kendall and they began corresponding. Kendall had reservations about McCrae's poetry. Ackland's biography quotes a letter to Thomas Butler, the editor of *The Freeman's Journal*, 19 August 1879: 'He is not a poet, but he always writes up to a respectable level and his scholarship is a great assistance.' Kendall expressed reservations about the literary work of many of his friends and associates over the years – Michael and Halloran and Woolley and Barton. It did not necessarily affect his social relationships. McCrae and Kendall kept in correspondence. Hugh McCrae published a selection of Kendall's correspondence with his father in 'The Yorick, 5 and 6. – A New Light on Kendall' in *The Bulletin*, 27 February and 6 March 1929, and of Clarke's with his father in 'The Yorick, 2. – The Marcus Clarke Letters' in *The Bulletin*, 6 February 1929. McCrae and Clarke kept in correspondence, but not Kendall and Clarke.

21 November 1879 Kendall wrote to McCrae responding to McCrae's dedicating a poem to him: 'Of course, the dedication of your noble poem to me will be a source of immense pleasure. I am glad to hear that you have time for work in the domain of *belles* letters. I have none; indeed I

am out of the running altogether. For years past I have been engaged in a business which keeps me going from six a.m. till nine p.m. I have not even a chance for reading.'



Frank Myers wrote a memoir, 'The Other Kendall', for *The Bulletin*, 17 September 1903, recalling the poet in the late 1870s: 'Henry Clarence Kendall has been variously set before the world, by biographers more or less competent; but always as one who, save for some adventitious or involuntary moments of lucidity and reason, needed to be apologized for. There was another Kendall, who, it seems to me, did not require or favour apology in any sort whatever; who was very much disposed to take the world fighting; whose lapses were adventitious or involuntary; and whose actual self, otherwise established and environed, might have stood out and been remembered, courageous and strong. I had a letter from Kendall some five and twenty years ago. He was at Camden Haven then; I up above Tumberumba, where diggers fossicked, cattle duffers lurked, and the polite world seemed remote. Kendall's letter was not all polite. It harmonized with a good many things living and lying about.

"I envy your camp under Kosciusko; you ought to do something up there, at least you will have a better chance than in the bitter, bad Bohemia of either Sydney or Melbourne. And, if you eschew Bohemia and get amongst high-class journalism, as you say (I never found out), the people to whom you sell yourself will emasculate you. If you do anything virile and they accept, it will duly appear eunuch ... You think you will find companionship, do you? And with congenial surroundings a man may live a cleanly life and still keep his inspirations warm. I tell you you were never so lonely in 27 deg. South-West as you will be in Collins or Pitt Street. If you have got any genius, or if any genius has got you, keep away! Genius is worse used in the cities of Australia than ever was pearl by swine, and the man in whom it lurks, as a disease, is just broken up like oyster-shell and pitched on to the middens. Did not your friend, Marcus Clarke, tell you that? He published the fact in even plainer terms, and yet is himself crook-backed and broken-kneed with bowing to Rimmon. And yet the Jews and the bailiffs are with him, and will be to the end."

'Kendall, by the way, did not like Clarke; could never even discover excellence in that good bit of genuine Australian prose, the introduction to Gordon's poems.

'When we met in Sydney a year or two later Kendall's residence was still Camden Haven; his occupation school-teaching and measuring up timber for the sawyers. The only regular literary work he was "permitted to do" took the shape of odd paragraphs in "The Meddler" column of *The Sydney Mail*.

'I told a political friend, a pretty good fellow, too of Kendall's expected arrival.

"Last time I saw him," said he, "he was coming out of that building at the corner of Pitt and O'Connell Streets which looks like a penitentiary for the correction of literary aspirants. His coat was green with wear, and split down the back."

"Did you take him round to David Jones or do the St Martin business on his behalf?"

‘The political gentleman went away with a snort.’

Myers continues: ‘When I met Kendall he was not comely. There was nothing about him physically or sartorially to beget desire; but once he began to talk none but a fool could affect contempt. The Lord God had put a soul in him, and that soul burned on his tongue and lightened through his eyes.’

Myers described Kendall’s appearance at this time: ‘The furrows of his face hardened like crinkles in molten metal set while in motion. Kendall had the hardest-lined face I ever saw. It was like the “old Hickory” of Abraham Lincoln, or the chiselled granite of Carlyle. But all the hell he had endured left no bale-fire in his eyes. They showed clear and kindly always, as did Jonathan Swift’s, in the worst of his madness.

‘It was difficult to get him to talk about himself or his work unless the aggressive bitterness within drove him to assertion rather than to complaining.

“‘A man has to do his duty in those places wherein it pleases this generation to place him. They ‘pound’ him generally, as the wise men of Gotham, U.S., did Pegasus. But there is always a treadmill in the pound, and he has no wings. I have to do my six hours daily up such steps as two score of bush infants provide. And, by way of variety, take a turn with measuring tape and pencil over a few thousand logs and planks of cedar. And, why don’t I do something really big? It is practicable, of course, and easy. Charles Badham would make or maintain a reputation for scholarship if he had to serve six hours a day as amanuensis to Henry Parkes.’”

Badham was professor of classics and logic at the University of Sydney from 1867 to 1884, succeeding Woolley who drowned when the *London* went down in the Bay of Biscay in 1866. Myers continues:

‘We turned, or tried to turn, towards the recompenses, the consolations. He was hard, far-reaching, and absolutely logical.

“‘Only fools, and people who have not been there, talk about consolation and recompense. An angel only comes to you to impose a task. He flashes inspiration, the thought which begets obligation. And he will swing a knotted scourge later if you do not take that obligation up.

“‘“Thoughts in hours of insight willed’ is the test of the proper discourse, is it not? Only in the context, if Matthew Arnold had been scorched a bit hotter, he would have written ‘must’ be, not ‘may’. ‘Must be through days of gloom fulfilled.’ Woe be to you if fulfilment fails!”

“‘But with fulfilment, achievement?”

‘He opened his eyes wide. “Oh, yes, I have fulfilled and achieved. I wrote a cantata for an exhibition, and half fulfilled some obligations in the way of boots and store bills. And another poem of occasion brought in another hundred pounds. And they published me in the papers; and a few folks would have had me out to their houses on show. Oh, yes, there are rewards for fulfilment and achievement. You may almost hope to be allowed to lick the fleshpots with scullions permanently if – you succeed!”

‘He was in a bitter mood. It was difficult to find him earnest, communicative, and otherwise ...’

Myers reflected: 'Even the Bohemians of today know little of the bitter loneliness of that life. In Sydney or Melbourne then there was no literary or artistic companionship of any sort whatever. A few eminent people toyed with art and literature in a dilettante style; but their patronage was only to be won by subservient respectability. The press did nothing. Till Gresley Lukin got hold of *The Queenslander*, Kendall or Gordon or Brunton Stephens would not have been offered payment for contributions in verse to any weekly paper in Australia; and *The Queenslander* did not long uphold its unfamiliar departure. A good deal of genius was stifled in those days, and it may be that a few in whom the true passion was strong choked it out, as resolute men do constantly with a drink, drug or gambling habit. It made a worse wreck of those lives than any of those habits.'

Myers was another writer who knew poverty. In *A. G. Stephens: Selected Writings* Leon Cantrell published Stephens' record of visiting J. F. Archibald in Callan Park Asylum for the Insane in 1907: 'Archibald told me how he received a letter from Frank Myers from Hyde Park, stating that the stamp upon it was due to the charity of a girl whom he had met and asked for ten shillings. Archibald said, "I never read a letter so pathetic. It made your heart bleed. I sent him £10."'



In November 1879 the first issue of the *Victorian Review* appeared. *The Argus* commented, 3 November: 'This is the handsomest and most substantial looking periodical which has yet made its appearance in Victoria.' Henry Mortimer Franklyn, an American journalist living in Melbourne, promoted the Victorian Review Publishing Company and had the editorial by-line. He went bankrupt in 1886.

Arthur Patchett Martin recalls of Clarke: 'To the pages of the *Victorian Review* he contributed a brilliant if not profound article which boldly expressed his agnostic views, and was entitled "Civilisation without Delusion" ... The much respected Dr Moorhouse, Bishop of Melbourne, published a grave reply to it.

"Conceive my soul-felt joy," Clarke wrote to a literary acquaintance of kindred spirit, "when I saw those reverend gaiters actually getting over the 'ropes,' and beheld his Lordship throw his shapely shovel hat fairly into the ring!"

'He thereupon sat down and indicted "A Letter to his Lordship the Bishop of Melbourne," which the editor of the *Victorian Review* declined, perhaps from prudential rather than theological reasons, to publish. The pages of the rival magazine were, however, at once placed at his service, but with unexpected results. Owing to the "pressure" of influential religious subscribers that particular number of the *Melbourne Review* was "suppressed" by the publisher, to the great delight of the too flippant contributor.'

13 January 1880 *The Age* reported: 'Some surprise was expressed yesterday in literary circles when it became known that Mr George Robertson, publisher of the *Melbourne Review*, had refused to continue the publication of the last number. The reason alleged for this stop, which

astonished no one more than the responsible conductors of the *Review*, was that it contained a letter to the Bishop of Melbourne written by Marcus Clarke, and that this letter had given great offence to a large and respectable section of the community. The conductors of the journal were, of course, powerless in the matter, and, not wishing to quarrel with the publisher, they had to submit, notwithstanding that there was a great and growing public demand for the number. We understand it is intended to reprint the letter in a pamphlet form.'

The *Melbourne Review* had been founded in January 1876. Clarke had contributed the first part of an article on the Eureka Stockade to its first issue, but part two seems never to have appeared. In a letter to Mackinnon in the State Library of Victoria, Arthur Patchett Martin wrote that Turner always claimed to be the founder of the *Melbourne Review* when in fact Martin was. It was edited by a committee consisting of Henry Gyles Turner, Arthur Patchett Martin and A. M. Topp, all members of the *Yorick*, and had had a number of publishers, George Robertson the most recent. Robertson now refused to continue as publisher until the editorial committee was reformed, Stuart records in her biography of James Smith. Martin and Topp both stepped down, and Turner became joint-editor with Alexander Sutherland until the magazine folded in 1885.

The letter Clarke published in *The Argus*, 2 December 1879, did nothing to improve matters: 'In your notice of the current number of the *Victorian Review* you make an assumption concerning me which I am sure you will permit me to correct. In your review of the comments of the Bishop of Melbourne upon my recent paper, "Civilisation without Delusion," you convey the impression to your readers that I denied the existence of God. I expressly asserted my reverential belief in Him, saying only that the gods of the supernatural religion had no existence save in the imaginations of men, and this conclusion had been practically admitted by modern writers. My words were: "The belief in sacred incarnations, in heavenly interpositions, in personal relations with the Awful Spirit of the Universe, is dead."

'It is true that the bishop writes: "Mr Clarke thinks that there is no other God but one made out of ideas, whom it is foolish to worship." The bishop (unintentionally, of course) misquotes me. I wrote: "A man can only believe that which it is possible for him to believe, and a mind once convinced that God has been made out of ideas, and that it is as foolish to worship a god made out of wood, is brought face to face with the conclusion that prayers and praises are valueless."

'I am aware that to deem God a being who never appeared in the flesh on this planet, who cannot be induced by the prayers or praises of men to alter the course of the seasons, or to interfere with the workings of His universe, is to expose oneself to the imputation of heresy and infidelity. But to call such a man an atheist is to do him a very grave injustice.'

The crisis of religious faith was one of the foremost issues of the nineteenth century. Clarke, Gordon and Kendall all expressed it in their work. Clarke's portrayal of the conformist Rev. Meekin and the alcoholic, anguished, doubting Rev. North was one of the powerful achievements of *His Natural Life*. But presenting the theme in a novel or poem was one thing. It might attract notice in a book review. Equally, it might not. Engaging in public confrontation with a bishop in a personal essay and letter to the press was something else. It blew up into a major controversy reaching far beyond the confines of the literary world.



Having offended the conservatives by his controversy with the bishop, Clarke now alienated the radicals by attacking his friends in the Berry administration. The radical Berry ministry was still embattled with the conservative upper house, and had decided to deal directly with London. Turner records in his *History of Victoria*: ‘Mr Berry arranged that an embassy should proceed to England ... Needless to say that, except for a very pleasant jaunt for the ambassadors in dignified state at the public expense, no benefit accrued from the mission.’ The embassy returned in June 1879. The episode was a gift to political satirists.

In 1876 Joseph Aarons had built the Academy of Music in Bourke Street. In 1879 he decided to mount a production of Gilbert A’Beckett’s burlesque *The Happy Land*, adapted from the play *The Wicked World* by W. S. Gilbert (under the pseudonym F. Tomline). It dealt with the visit of three politicians to Fairyland, where the benefits of popular government are explained to them. The Berry government banned it. *The Argus* reported, 22 January: ‘In theatrical circles the usually dull post-Christmas season has been enlivened by the unprecedented action of the Chief Secretary (Mr Berry) in arbitrarily prohibiting the performance of a burlesque at the Academy of Music by virtue of the power vested in him under the act relating to licensed theatres. The piece that has thus fallen under the censure of the Ministry is entitled *The Happy Land*. It was originally played in London during the last Liberal administration and caused some sensation on account of the three principal characters being caricatures of Messrs Gladstone, Lowe, and Ayrton. Objection was taken it will be remembered to some parts of the dialogue by the Lord Chamberlain, and the play was withdrawn and recast after which it had a short run during which the statesmen most satirized attended the performance and laughed heartily at the jokes. The piece as prepared for representation here was localized, under the rose, by Mr Marcus Clarke, an adherent of the Berry Ministry, and a contributor to the Ministerial press, and the three leading characters, according to the hoarding placards, bore a considerable resemblance to the Chief Secretary and the Ministers of Public Instruction and Railways. It might have been supposed that those gentlemen would have been content to follow the example set them by the illustrious statesmen at home under similar circumstances but such has not been the case. The Chief Secretary, who evidently did not entertain that opinion, made haste to let the public know that what was permissible in Great Britain could not be allowed under our Victorian constitution. Great surprise was occasioned when two days before the date advertised for the presentation of the piece, a peremptory notice was given to the lessee, manager and actors of the theatre, under the hand of Mr Graham Berry, forbidding the performance. In vain the lessee and manager waited upon the new censor, promising, cap in hand, that the characters should not be dressed as represented in the bills and piteously pleading that anything that might be deemed objectionable should be struck out; the Chief Secretary in the interests of “the preservation of good manners, decorum, and the public peace,” refused to remove the interdict. As the principal parts of the dialogue have been published in the press, and seem to contain nothing of an objectionable nature, the flimsiness of this

pretence has become apparent to all. Ultimately, it was understood that the English version would be allowed, all reference to local politics being excluded. The piece was accordingly produced last Saturday night, the principal characters being in ordinary private dress and the allusion to political subjects were toned down or suppressed. As might have been expected, the unusual action of the Government was the means of bringing together a crowded house, enthusiastic in the highest degree, and ready to applaud every satirical reference to the blessings of popular government. The effect was considerably heightened by the substitution of "Hush! prohibited," in the places where the cuts occurred, and the audience were kept in a continual roar of laughter. Several police officers were present to watch the proceedings, and a report was afterwards made by them to the Chief Secretary. At the next performance on the following Monday, it was rumoured that a detective was in attendance with a notice to serve on the lessee of the House, the Chief Secretary being of opinion that the prohibited play had been produced and the license therefore forfeited but the lessee did not put in an appearance, and nothing was done. The house was again crowded and the performers were called before the curtain after each act and loudly cheered. In the course of Tuesday the management was informed that the piece must be withdrawn or the licence for the theatre would be cancelled. Under the circumstances the management had no course but to give an assurance that the burlesque would not be put on the stage again. The matter was referred to at some length in the Legislative Assembly, and a letter stating that the lessee had been compelled to dismiss the company, was read. A public meeting was held in the theatre, at which resolutions were unanimously carried protesting against the arbitrary manner in which the Chief Secretary had exercised his authority.'

De Serville notes in *Athenæum Club* that 'the Government then tried to arrest Aarons, but he went into hiding.' The episode contributed to Aarons' ensuing insolvency.

The full text was printed as a programme, *The Happy Land*, adapted from the original of F. Tomline & Gilbert A'Beckett by H. E. Walton. *The Prohibited Version*, and *The Argus* and *The Age* both printed it on 17 January 1880. The author on the printed work was given as H. E. Walton, who acted in it with Olly Deering and Clarke's brother-in-law John Dunn. Robert Whitworth wrote to *The Argus* as the author on 16 January, and referred to Henry Walton as his associate, 19 January. 17 January *The Argus* called it 'a London play localized by Mr Marcus Clarke'. Clarke's involvement was suspected by the government, and made him powerful enemies.

The Brisbane Courier's Melbourne correspondent wrote, 28 January: 'The idea of localizing the brochure is not original, for the Melbourne adapter had a version cut and dried for the McCulloch party, but they went out of office and the script lay unheeded on his shelves. It was then proposed to fit the Berry Ministry with the *Happy Land* satires, and Mr Garnet Walch was applied to for a version, but knowing that the piece had been made local he sent his clients to the adapter, who was only too glad to substitute Mr Berry for Sir James McCulloch, and make the rest of the characters fit in. It is almost needless to say that the advertised and alleged "author" never wrote a line of the piece. Mr Marcus Clarke has registered it for the proprietors, but he

cannot be the author, for he is a member of the staff of the Liberal organ, and gets a good many commissions from the Government.’



In February 1880 the full Clarke–Moorhouse controversy was published by Baillière as *Civilization Without Delusion*. A bookseller recalled years later in *The Bulletin*, 16 November 1901: ‘I never saw so many black coats in my life before. The rush at the office was like a scramble for tickets on a first night. Altogether 10,000 copies were sold.’

Clarke declared: ‘The primary reason for the revolution which is occurring in the moral world is the abandonment of belief in the miraculous. Science having for the first time in the world’s history succeeded in getting it generally understood that all the operations of nature are conducted upon certain fixed principles which no amount of spiritual exercise can affect, the comforting but delusive theory that God interferes to aid those who venerate him, and punish those who venerate him not, disappears. With the admission of the argument that miracles have been, and are, impossible, the claims of all religions founded upon miraculous performances fall to the ground.’

He was not denying the existence of God, nor the uses of religion: ‘Religion can never die, for religion is a political necessity. It was political necessity which created it and nourished it, and which has moulded and will ever mould its outward forms to suit the requirements of the times.’ But such words hardly appealed to the conservatives.

Sayers in *Shepherd’s Gold* quotes Kendall writing to N. Walter Swan, 23 April 1880: ‘I must congratulate Marcus Clarke in the issue of the battle between him and the Bishop. He, Clarke, was slightly “off his onion.” It is a pity to see a man of his unquestionable ability as utterly without judgment.’

The essays made Clarke no friends in the Melbourne establishment. Mackinnon records the reaction of the president of the trustees of the Public Library, Sir Redmond Barry:

‘The President appeared one evening in the librarian’s office with a somewhat clouded countenance, and said, “Good evening, Mr Clarke.”

‘The librarian with an intuitive feeling that a lecture was about to be administered, returned the salutation, asking the President if he could do anything for him.

‘President: “No, Mr Clarke; but you would oblige me greatly if you were to leave some things undone. For instance, that unfortunate article of yours – flippantly attacking so estimable a man as the bishop. Very indiscreet, Mr Clarke. I – think – I – should require – to have – some – thousands a year of a private income before I would – venture – upon writing such an – article on – such a subject, among so punctilious a community as exists here. Good evening, Mr Clarke.”’

Barry knew about the punctiliousness of the community. Bishop Moorhouse was tolerant but his predecessor, Bishop Perry, had been low-church and censorious. Galbally quotes Barry’s diary, September 1860: ‘Bishop told me he must decline further intimacy with me.’ It made no difference to Barry who continued to maintain his mistress, Mrs Barrow. And continued to be upbraided, next by George Higinbotham. Curtis Candler, the Melbourne coroner, and secretary of

the Melbourne Club, recorded in his diary: ‘*On dit* has it that the Attorney-General has written a letter of Sir R. B. to the effect that the state of concubinage in which he has been living for some years is against the public morality and suggesting that he must *marry the lady!*’

Clarke’s mistake was publicly to question the underpinnings of the proclaimed moral standards, and then to compound the misjudgment by involving himself in politics in *The Happy Land*, and caricaturing the political party with which he was associated, and which had supported him.



Clarke’s friend from the Wimmera, Nathaniel Walter Swan, now editor and part owner of the *Pleasant Creek News and Stawell Chronicle*, won the £100 prize for a novel offered by *The Sydney Mail* with *Luke Miver’s Harvest*. It was serialized in the *Mail* from 8 March to 19 July 1879, and Swan went on to publish further fiction there through the next three years. Boldrewood serialized *Robbery Under Arms* in the *Mail* in 1882–83. In his introduction to the reissue of *Luke Miver’s Harvest* Heseltine quotes from Swan’s correspondence. Kendall wrote congratulating him and Swan replied: ‘It would be very absurd of me not to say at once that I was pleased and flattered and glad when I read your letter. I have had a good many on the same subject but only one from Henry Kendall which is worth bushels from all other sources. I don’t think I could say more because it *exactly* expresses what I mean. I have known you now for many years and I have delighted not a few with the grand verse of yours

‘If the way had been shorter and greener

‘And brighter it might have been brave

‘But the goal was too far and he fainted

‘Like Peter with Christ on the wave.

‘You are perhaps not aware (as indeed how could you?) that any stray pieces of yours which I have come across I have had republished as witness the enclosed – these for private circulation among my friends. You will find ideas which with shame and confusion of face I admit I have priggled from you in the Christmas story in *The Queenslander* and which I forward you by this post.

‘I wish I was a younger man. I am over forty being I fear, the old young man or the young old man that Carlyle writes of. I was at the Yorick Club (Melbourne) a short time since and took part in discussing you ...

‘I rather fancy Clarke has given over writing novels. It is true he has been at me for a long time but as I told him he is getting lazy. That is a state I cannot afford and I work hard.’

16 January 1880 Kendall replied: ‘Your mention of the Yorick Club called up many memories of the darkest period of my life. I left Melbourne with the shadow of insanity on me. It cheers me indeed to think that, after years of misunderstanding, “kind words” have been spoken of me. In that wild bleak Bohemia south of the Murray, I went through Gethsemane and I am only the grey

shadow of the young man who commenced to write with so much enthusiasm in 1861. You must excuse me for having said so much. Your letter, my dear old boy, has excited me.

‘The bread I am eating is not the bitter bread that is swallowed by the journalist. I had enough of that six years ago. Writing an article on the current price of breadstuffs this day, and another on the last poem of Robert Browning next morning, and getting penny-a-line as pay for each, took strength and heart out of me. But, by turning to another sphere of action, I cannot say that I have greatly bettered myself.

‘You ask the question – “do you work?” *I do*. From six a.m. to nine p.m. I cannot say that I have ten minutes leisure. What little I do in the literary way is got through on Sundays: and, being fagged with the week’s labour, my mind is never up to concert pitch. I am the bush representative of a large timber firm carrying on business in Sydney. My duty is to look after from 100 to 150 sawyers and splitters – great roughs with huge faithless faces, in whose eyes I am a rogue and *blank dog*, as all employers are ...

‘The charm of your *Queenslander* story is the charm of beauty – the leading characteristic of *Two Wives* is – so far – power. I have seen your *Australasian* work. George McCrae speaks highly of it ...

‘*His Natural Life* is a work showing great industry and more than ordinary power; but it is not for the same shelf as *Luke Miver*. There are faults in the latter; but they are the faults of a strength that is rarely in repose. The Pegasus so to speak cannot be pulled up against his will ...

‘As you will see, my hand is fagged. It has been at the pen all day – so I must pull up. Your letter is highly, deeply prized. It is not often that one has an audience with a creative genius.

‘Dead beat for sleep.’

George Gordon McCrae had also entered the *Sydney Mail* novel competition. Along with Ada Cambridge, Catherine Helen Spence, Clara Cheeseman and some sixty or so other entrants, he was unsuccessful. 8 January 1880 he wrote to Kendall: ‘I never yet either met or saw Mr Swan to my knowledge but I do not go to the length of crediting him with genius – in fact if I may say so without appearing ungenerous (and this I would of all things avoid seeing he beat me in the competition for the *Sydney Mail* £100 for a story) he appears to me to act as a sort of literary galvanist to the shaky nerves of sensation-palled readers – he deals in fact too much in blood, brandy, and the uglier side of bush-life to please my fancy – yet with all this he is *undeniably clever and smart*.’

21 January 1880 Kendall replied: ‘Swan is a man of unquestionable genius – so are you, my dear boy; but you, being weaponed with rare scholarship, have an immense advantage over your fellow writer ... Why your story should not have been placed at least side by side with Swan’s, is a marvel to me. You can put a plot together, Swan cannot; you can paint character, Swan cannot; your situations are full of power, Swan’s are not; but in this *Luke Miver’s Harvest* he has floored you completely at the word painting business.’

‘I have not been in a city since August 1875,’ Kendall wrote to Swan from Camden Haven, 10 February 1880. Ackland reprints the letter in his selection of Kendall’s writing. ‘After a day’s work, I frequently feel terribly depressed; and such things as spirits, laudanum, chlorodyne, etc

have necessarily to be kept out of my way. This, you will admit, is exceedingly sad. Perhaps if I took exercise, the depression might be qualified; but exercise is out of the question. From sunrise till dark, *every day of the week, I have been in one room at one desk for the last four years*. This is the result of having an unwieldy business to look after. The business is my master – my family *must* be supported; and I *must* attend to the *means* of support. My Sundays are devoted to press work. What time have I for the English magazines, or for the labour of publishing a volume? Indeed, it is a matter of sorrow to me to think that I have never had the leisure to write anything *worth* publishing. I have not the confidence in myself that you expect me to have. Men of my stamp *never* possess it. An adverse criticism makes me cast aside for ever the thing criticized. Clarke knows this.’

He added a postscript to the letter. ‘I have not written to Clarke for years.’

Kendall’s works continued to be published, nonetheless. 15 March the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported: ‘The cantata written expressly for the opening ceremony of the first Sydney International Exhibition, the words by Mr Henry Kendall, is this day “published by the composer, with the kind permission of the Executive Commissioner, P. A. Jennings, C.M.G.” Signor Giorza obtained the express permission of his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales to dedicate this work to him, and from the list of subscribers attached to the first page, we see that the Governors of all the Australian Colonies, the members of the Ministry, and some of the representatives of each House of the New South Wales Parliament, and the Executive Commissioner are included in the promoters of the composer’s spirited enterprise in publishing it.

‘The cantata has been twice performed, and met on each occasion with marked success; this is not surprising, when the occasion which called it forth is remembered. The words are truly poetic and lyric; they were first heard in the Garden Palace, when its beauties – and they are many – were revealed to the gaze of admiring crowds, in the midst of all the dignity, beauty, and chivalry we could muster.’

The volume sold for ten shillings a copy leather bound, five shillings paper.

In the introduction to his selection from Kendall, Ackland quotes Kendall writing to McCrae, 26 March, ‘My life – take it right through – has been a rather hard one. I do not live in the world of letters – I am merely a lingerer beside it’, and to Swan, 24 September: ‘You can understand that all my verses are adumbrations. I have never had the time to write a long poem.’



In June 1880 *The Bulletin* was launched in Sydney. It was an immediate success. It was soon selling 20,000 copies a week, 40,000 by 1883, and 82,000 three years later. The early issues ran items on Clarke and Kendall, and McLaren records one contribution from Clarke in January 1881 and five from Kendall between January 1881 and May 1882. The direct contact of Kendall and Clarke with *The Bulletin* was slender, with Gordon non-existent; but a connection existed. *The Bulletin* celebrated their achievements and their struggles, and contributed to the establishment of their legend. Through the ensuing years it made a point of running reviews, gossip, memoirs,

anecdotes and other items about Clarke, Gordon, Kendall and McCrae, together with some posthumous republication of their work. *The Bulletin's* editor J. F. Archibald and its literary editor A. G. Stephens, so often celebrated as the grand originals of Australian literature, did not neglect to pay tribute to the members of the preceding literary generation.

Writing a quarter of a century later on 'The Genesis of *The Bulletin*' in *The Lone Hand*, June 1907, Archibald, who had worked on the Melbourne *Herald* with Walstab, recalled his glancing acquaintance with Clarke: 'I did not know much of Marcus Clarke, and only had casual speech with him twice, but I worshipped him from afar for what he had written. The last time he crossed my vision he was in faultlessly white flannel, with dark stripes down the outside of his trouser-legs. He was somewhat sleek-looking, by reason of the extreme care with which his shiny beard was trimmed, and he had about him an insouciance of manner, which dove-tailed nicely with a delightful story told of him long ago.

'He borrowed money from Aaron Waxman, and Aaron, a true Oriental of very decided, but crude, literary tastes, who had a keen eye for the picturesque, was quite proud of his association with his distinguished victim – I mean client. (I have often heard about Waxman's ecstasies over Clarke's preface to Lindsay Gordon's poems.) Well, Aaron, who to my personal knowledge was not half a bad fellow, made much of Marcus, but the latter was so ungrateful as not to pay him after all.

"Ah! Marcoos, Marcoos," whined the money-lender, 'I am surely de most disappointed man – look at all I have done for you. Didn't I lend you monish and sharge you only vivty per shent, and didn't I invite you to my barties?'"

"Yes," coolly replied the stony-hearted Marcus, "and didn't I go!"

'Which recalls a story about Clarke and another old-time Jewish friend of mine, Maurice Brodzky. Brodzky was an habitué of Melbourne Public Library, where Clarke was second-in-command, and one day it was reported to Marcus that a man in the reading room had taken off one boot, and was resting his foot on a chair opposite him. This was Brodzky, who had just badly crushed his toe.

"Sir," said Clarke, approaching him, "it behoves not a Christian gentleman thus to comport himself."

"Alas!" replied Brodzky, "I am neither a Christian nor a gentleman."



To the enemies Clarke had made with the Bishop Moorhouse controversy and his involvement in *The Happy Land*, Clarke now added more by his contributions to the Atticus 'Under the Verandah' column he wrote for *The Leader*, which were reported widely. *The Brisbane Courier*, 13 May 1880, covering a court case remarked: 'Atticus, in *The Leader*, commented very strongly upon Mr Fink's conduct and line of examination, accusing him of impertinence. The young barrister, who affects the pugilistic, attributes this to Mr Marcus Clarke, so he is round after that journalist ...' Clarke also used the column to conduct a feud with the journalist David Blair. May 1880 Blair responded with an anonymous pamphlet attacking Clarke as 'liar, coward, bully, thief,

skunk'. The *South Australian Register* commented, 22 July: 'A humorous anecdote is in circulation in literary circles regarding the action for slander which has been initiated by Mr Marcus Clarke against Mr David Blair (says Atticus, in *The Leader*). Mr Blair gave his rhymed couplets Latin headings, and showed himself so purely ignorant of that language as to entitle his libels "Ad Marcum" or verses "In Praise of Marcus," only stopping the press after a number of copies were printed to substitute on the advice of some fairly educated friend the word "in" (against) for "ad" ... Without discussing the merits of the quarrel which Mr Blair has sought, it is to be regretted on his own sake that he does not conceal his literary deficiencies more dexterously.' In the end Clarke took no legal action. He probably could not afford to.

Randolph Bedford recalled in *Naught to Thirty-Three*: 'Bob Whitworth, a faded Apollo, told us that poverty had forced him out of literature and into the drama – the immortal drama of Punch and Judy, in which he had played all the parts.' Similar financial necessity is said to have driven Clarke to playwriting, and his wife back onto the stage.

5 July 1880 *The Argus* reported: 'Every part of the Bijou Theatre was well filled on Saturday evening to witness the reappearance of an actress who, as Miss Marian Dunn, occupied a high place in public estimation a dozen years ago. Having taken leave of the stage in the character of Josephine, in Buckstone's two act drama of *The Child of the Regiment*, Mrs Marcus Clarke selected that part for her re-entry upon the boards, and upon presenting her self in the picturesque costume of the vivandière, she experienced that enthusiastic reception which the playgoing public of Melbourne always accords to an old favourite. Owing to the combined influence of a severe cold, some nervousness, and long disuse in a theatre, her voice was not heard to advantage in the airs which constitute the most attractive feature of the performance, but encouraged and sustained by the applause of a large and sympathetic audience, she struggled courageously with the difficulties of her position, and was called before the curtain at the end of the first act ... and the curtain fell amidst many manifestations of kindly feeling for the young lady who has resumed the practice of a profession with which she was honourably associated in very early life.'

19 July Marian appeared again, in a play by Clarke. Turner writes in the *Melbourne Review*, 'she appeared in the sparkling little comedy-drama called *A Daughter of Eve*, written expressly for his wife's re-appearance on the stage, and in which she achieved a most pronounced success at the Bijou Theatre.' It ran for five performances.

The Queenslander's Victorian correspondent wrote, 24 July: 'In the theatrical world the one event of the last few days has been the return to the stage of a lady who, when she and we – well, were ten or twelve years younger – won all our hearts – Marian Dunn (Mrs Marcus Clarke). The return of this lady to the stage, which is in some respects to be regretted, has not been the immediate success that was anticipated. It is, however, a success that is daily growing and taking root.'

31 July she appeared in *Forbidden Fruit, or the Custom of Caudubec*, which Clarke adapted from an 1848 French comedy by Melesville and Carmouche, and which also ran for five performances at the Bijou. Elliott quotes one of the reviewers: 'Twelve years have wrought a great change since she followed poor Akhurst's punning advice to "marry an' done with it."'

Atticus commented in *The Leader*: ‘Who thinks it needful to excuse a man for writing a comedy? But if his wife plays in that comedy – hoop-la! All the pack are loose and the poor woman goes on the stage, like Lady Teazle, to “leave her character behind her.”’ Mackinnon recalled: ‘Mrs Clarke did every justice to her histrionic abilities, though indifferently supported.’

It was Clarke’s last completed play. Mackinnon noted: ‘there is a probability of another dramatic work of his being played in Paris, namely, the opéra-bouffe of *Queen Venus*, the libretto of which he was writing for M. Kowalski at the time of his sudden death. Of this two acts were completed, and the third and final one sketched out; and for the words M. Kowalski had composed music, which was admitted by all privileged to hear it as thoroughly Offenbachian in character.’ Henri Kowalski conducted its first performance in Sydney in 1889 under the title *Moustique*.



The success and recognition resulting from the cantata and poem for the Sydney International Exhibition, and the correspondence with the old Yorick members McCrae and Swan encouraged and stimulated Kendall. He entered the competition for the fifty guinea prize offered for a cantata to open the Melbourne International Exhibition. His entry came third. The winner was J. W. Meaden. ‘I know the author – he is a good fellow – but he cannot write,’ Kendall wrote to Butler, 20 March 1880, describing the circumstances of composing his own entry: ‘In two hours (surrounded by a ring of drunken sawyers and splitters, interrupted every three minutes and depressed by my wife’s sickness).’ He made a second attempt but it arrived too late, he explained, ‘owing to the flooded state of the roads between here and Raymond Terrace’.

20 March 1880 *The Argus* published a letter from the vice president of the Art Union of Victoria: ‘During the depression of the last two years we have nearly maintained the subscription list of previous years, and the council of the Art Union hopes that the improved prospects of the colonies will bring this year an appreciable increase ...’ It announced ‘for presentation to the subscribers in handsome book form an Australian poem by Henry Kendall.’

George McCrae had sent Kendall a copy of his *Man in the Iron Mask* and 2 June 1880 Kendall wrote back suggesting he might review it either in *The Queenslander* or *The Sydney Mail*, though he never did. He asked: ‘What are you doing? Are you sulking like the son of Thetis in your tent; or are you “boozing up” with Marcus Clarke and other remnants of the grand old crowd?’

The son of Thetis was Achilles; the opening poem of Gordon’s *Sea Spray and Smoke Drift* was ‘Podas Okus’ (swift-footed), describing the last hours of Achilles in his tent. Kendall added a postscript to the letter: ‘I am trying to suppress my Melbourne volume.’ Melbourne was still a painful memory. He wrote to McCrae 22 June 1880: ‘You are very kind in mentioning acquaintances of other days, but Swan and yourself are the only men in Victoria that I care to know.’ He returned to the topic, 22 August: ‘I have always been too heavily handicapped by circumstances to do anything worth speaking of. The only volume I ever published was written amidst distress and dissipation; and I have been trying to suppress it ever since.’

In what way Kendall was suppressing *Leaves from Australian Forests* is unclear. There was no shortage of copies in Melbourne. Sutherland wrote in the *Melbourne Review*, October 1882: 'They were published thirteen years ago, and there are still several hundred copies for sale in the city at sixpence apiece!' G. B. Barton recalled in the *Centennial Magazine* in 1889: 'Some years ago, while passing down a street in Melbourne, I noticed a parcel of small books in a bookseller's shop window, conspicuously labelled "*Leaves from Australian Forests by Henry Kendall*; price one shilling." Not having previously seen, or even heard of, the book, although it had been published some years previously, I went in to buy a copy, and in reply to my inquiry how it was that a volume of Kendall's poetry could be sold at such a price as a shilling? the shopkeeper told me that there was no sale for the book, that he was glad to get rid of it at any price.'

Leaves from Australian Forests had been a failure commercially. It was now rejected by its author. Nonetheless, Kendall had begun to think of publishing a new collection of poems. He consulted a number of people for advice, people with some knowledge of publishing and public taste. F. W. Ward, the editor of *The Sydney Mail*, told him he would need at least three to four hundred subscribers, Reed records in his dissertation. 31 May 1880 Kendall wrote to Thomas Butler, the editor of *The Freeman's Journal*: 'The *Sydney Mail* people and others strongly advise me to publish a volume. I should like to hear your views on the matter.' And he wrote to Robert Wisdom, the New South Wales Attorney-General, who replied, 28 June: 'I feel certain that such a publication would meet with success. There would be no difficulty getting the work published by subscription. If you think well of the idea let me know and I will endeavour to interest my literary friends with a view to having the work brought out without any expense to yourself.'

Encouraged by the positive response, Kendall began assembling his first book since leaving Melbourne, a collection of 35 poems, *Songs from the Mountains*.

'I was born in the forests and the mountains were my sponsors,' he wrote to Brunton Stephens, 5 June 1880.



At the same time, Kendall began looking for government patronage. Despite having attacked Parkes in his satire on the gagging bill a year earlier, Kendall had managed a rapprochement, and at Parkes' request published a memorial poem to his son, 'In Memory of Robert Parkes', in *Town and Country Journal*, 14 February 1880. 23 June Kendall wrote to Parkes: 'For the last six or seven years I have lived a comparatively blameless life. It may not be thought premature on my part to suppose that I have now completed a fair term of penance. I do not wish to excuse past sin by saying that it was associated with immense affliction of body and mind and the influence of insane acts by blood-relatives, – I merely wish to point out that I have tried to live it down.'

'It may possibly be known to you that the position which I have held here for nearly seven years is not a happy one. Certainly, my employers are very kind to me, but their sympathy does not make up for the absence of leisure, books, and the many other things needed by a man who has a leaning towards letters ...

‘You will see the object of this letter. I want to better my position for the sake of my children that are growing up about me. This is no place for them; and I will not last for ever. Time is writing sad things on my hair; and I am not so strong as I used to be. No city situation is sought by me; for many reasons, the country is my proper place. A position like that of forest ranger would satisfy me; and my business faculty, together with my intimate knowledge of Australian timber and timber getters, would aid me in the work of such an office. The salary need not be great – I could supplement it with income from journalism.

‘I do not wish you to take any step inconsistent with the high character of your office. It is very many years since I last asked a public man to assist me; and only the touching plea on young dependent faces makes me do so now. On behalf of my children, – in the interests of their noble mother, I approach, not the titled statesman, but the man of letters whose sympathy for letters is still a warm breathing fact; and ask him – the head of an Australian Government – to aid, in the way indicated, the first *native* who has with any degree of emphasis stamped his name upon the poetic literature of Australia. The beauty that would be associated with *your* help would shine in the eyes of everybody.’

W. H. Wilde records that Parkes put aside any personal irritation and replied promptly. He began putting plans into action. 7 October 1880, he wrote to James Watson: ‘As you know he has in the past treated me with cruel ingratitude. But what remains of life for me is too short to entertain ill-will towards any one.’



9 July 1880 Kendall wrote to Swan: ‘George Gordon McCrae is not able to find a publisher for the volume which he wishes to dedicate to me. He is an able fellow; but he pitches his music too high. The people do not understand him. Still, he is a man of extraordinary capacity; and his heart is in the right place.

‘Acting upon the advice of yourself and many others, I intend to publish a volume. Next week, I will forward the first “copy” to the publisher. As I hate the thought of begging subscription lists, the coin will come out of my own pocket. The book will contain about 240 pages. Much of the matter will be new to you. I expect to see a sale sufficient to cover the outlay; but no profit is anticipated. Of course, you will give me a leg up – as the saying is – with your pen.

‘Mrs Kendall is better; but she is by no means well. She is a glorious wife; but a stranger to my inner self. We have been eleven years married; and, during all that time, I have never read a line of my verse to her. She loves me deeply, purely; but she does not care for poetry. I am glad of it; she is free of the strong, wild curse which clings to men and women of my temperament.’

‘I am about to publish a volume,’ he wrote to Parkes the following day.

19 August he wrote to McCrae: ‘It strikes me that I have seen the last of my city life. My health is not what it used to be. The effects of sorrow and sin are writing characters of sad emphasis on me.’

2 September 1880 Kendall wrote to another associate of his Melbourne period, James Smith: 'After a silence of ten years I intend to prove that the most Australian verses yet written in the colonies has come from the hands of an Australian. I will show that I too can "range from grave to gay." Knowing that you used to sympathize with me, I send you a subscription list. I am spending £100 over the work; and to accomplished men like you, I naturally turn for protection against loss. The book will be out in two months from this date. In the event of your moving in the matter, will you kindly return the subscription list to Mr Robert Wisdom, the Attorney-General of this colony. He is pushing matters for me, but for the present I am finding the money.'

8 September Kendall wrote to McCrae: 'At the advice of Messrs Dalley, Wisdom (our Attorney-General) and others, I am bringing out a volume of serious and satirical poetry. I will dedicate this book to a mountain. It will be out in November; and its cover will embrace 240 pages. I am risking £100 over it. Perhaps you will be able to get me a few subscribers.' He added: 'My dear old man, I am so d——d tired that I cannot go on.'

Smith responded positively. 9 September Kendall wrote to Swan: 'I knew you and James Smith were trumps. And therefore you two were the men I selected to help me in Victoria ... Of course I shall try for English reviews; but I am afraid you will be disappointed with the results. The volume will be, by no means, a representative one. Want of money will confine me to about 240 pages; but I have enough stock in hand to fill 1000 pages.'

2 October he wrote again to McCrae: 'I have been doubled up with a sort of low fever – hence my silence. Oakley has written to me, after a silence of ten years. His letter is characteristic – full of "d——d grim patronage" as Jerrold hath it ... '

Kendall's previous books had brought him no financial reward. This time he selected the contents with a view to their commercial potential. He told McCrae he was determined not to lose money on the venture: 'My volume will appear at the beginning of next month. You will be pleased to hear that over 500 copies have already been ordered. The book will disappoint you; but the verses that eclectics like you will sneer at are the ones that Tom, Jack and Harry admire. I want to make friends of these gentlemen with a view to the recovery of my outlay.

'I did right in dedicating the volume to a mountain. No "big man" has ever helped me; and the money spent over this venture has come out of my own pocket ...

'Too queer to write any more. I have heard some talk of Marcus Clarke's preface to poor Gordon's poems. What is it like?'

Kendall had passed beyond his estrangement from Clarke, and his references to him now are without hostility. 21 October 1880 he wrote a note of introduction to Clarke for Michael Fagan, who ran the Camden Haven branch of the family timber business, and was visiting Melbourne: 'I want you to know the bearer. He is the man who led me out of Gethsemane and set me in the sunshine.' But, Kendall wrote to Swan, 24 November: 'He regrets he was not able to see you or Clarke. Clarke was ill.' 8 December Kendall wrote to McCrae: 'What is up with Marcus Clarke? I gave Fagan a letter to him; but, although he received it, he took care to keep out of Fagan's road. Perhaps he is in trouble.'

Indeed he was, though Kendall had no idea how seriously.



Clarke had problems with both his health and his finances. *The Bulletin* reported 11 September 1880: 'A well-known Melbourne *littérateur* has been suffering from ophthalmia, measles and bailiffs. Pretty rough on an eight stone man.'

In *My Father and My Father's Friends* Hugh McCrae quotes a letter Clarke wrote to George from Robe Street, St Kilda: 'I have been deuced bad but am now a little better and visit the Library – at the glimpses of the moon – with goggles concealing my manly optics. To add to my delight my eldest boy has indulged in a little spree of measles all by himself and as we are going to move next week to a place nearer Balaclava, you can guess that the young rascal's selfish sport has a little incommoded us. Do not address again to the Lodge in the Garden of Cucumbers but to the Library. The new house is called Sunnyside – principally because it is as damp as blazes (rather Oirish this) – and is elegantly situated in Chapel Street next to the residency of Tom Miller (be God sir!) and opposite the Wesleyan chapel (God be good to us!). The state school (och the haythins) is forninst the door, and a mighty civil butcher round the corner ...'

As for the bailiffs, Maurice Brodzky wrote in *The Bulletin*, 23 May 1885, about how Clarke 'went to the Melbourne journal with which he was connected and represented that the bailiffs were in his house, and that a £10 note alone would exorcize them. It was forthcoming. Marcus at once forgot about the bailiffs, who were real enough, and went to the Governor's ball that night, where he shone.'

13 October Clarke's adaptation of *The Moonstone*, opened at the Theatre Royal. *The Argus* commented, 14 October 1879: 'Mr Wilkie Collins's story *The Moonstone*, which has been adapted for representation by Mr Marcus Clarke is particularly unsuited for dramatization. It is so skilfully constructed, every incident being so closely interlaced with all that goes before and all that follows after it, that the omission of a single link in the narrative mars its completeness and spoils its effect. Therefore the comparative failure of the piece at the Theatre Royal last night may be fairly attributed more to the want of judgement displayed by the adapter in the choice of his subject than to any want of ability in its treatment. Turned into a play, the story appears disjointed and incoherent, and the characters shadowy and unreal, so much so that it would be unjust to the ladies and gentlemen concerned to criticize them, inasmuch as the dialogue and situations afforded no scope for really good acting, and it was a significant fact that at the fall of the curtain after the end of the fourth act the most boisterous call was for the small boy who played Gooseberry, and who had scarcely a word to say throughout the piece.'

The Moonstone had been a best-selling novel since its publication in 1868, and has never been out of print. Wilkie Collins' own dramatization of it was not a success, lasting for nine weeks only at London's Royal Olympic in 1877. Clarke's adaptation, made with Collins' consent, ran for five performances. Elliott quotes Clarke's description of it to McCrae, 30 October, as 'simply the biggest failure ever produced in any theatre'. McCrae made some watercolour sketches for the play, preserved in the State Library of Victoria.

Clarke now made an attempt to interest a publisher in his uncompleted *Felix and Felicitas*. Hergenhan in 'The English Publication of Australian Novels in the Nineteenth Century' quotes George Bentley's encouraging response, November 1880: 'I have safely received the few sheets of the book you kindly sent to me.

'I am unable without seeing the whole to speak definitely of the book, but as far as it goes I like it. If it makes as much as your former work I will pay you fifty pounds for it, if you will first let me see the whole work. Send the whole to me, and I will telegraph to you "Yes" or "No." If "No" I will try to place it elsewhere for you in England, but I do not anticipate this decision.

'I take it I should *reprint* in England, so don't work any copies for our market, and above all take care that none of your copies come over here except the one to me.'

Mackinnon quotes a comment from Frances Cashel Hoey: 'I have been allowed the privilege of reading a few chapters of a novel begun by Mr Marcus Clarke, under the title *Felix and Felicitas*. The promise of those chapters is quite exceptional; they equal in brilliancy and vivacity the best writing of Edward Whitty, and they surpass that vivid writer in construction.'

But Clarke never completed the novel.



After five years in India, Sir Andrew Clarke returned to England in February 1880. He reverted to his position as a Colonel of Royal Engineers, and then in April 1881 he was appointed Commandant of the School of Military Engineering at Chatham, a position he held until he was appointed Inspector-General of Fortifications in 1882.

4 September *The Argus* reported on the bankruptcy proceedings of the publisher, F. F. Baillière. The finances were complicated, and involved Clarke: 'R. P. Whitworth, to whom witness owed money, was an author. Aaron Waxman was down in his schedule as a creditor for £250. He gave Waxman a bill for £250 in April 1880. That bill was given jointly by witness and Marcus Clarke, and Clarke got all the proceeds. Witness at the time was about to publish a book for Clarke. He believed Waxman got no security. Some of the money had been repaid by Clarke, and Waxman now only claimed from witness on account of the bill £100.'

But some of the money had not been repaid by Clarke, and this was to lead to Waxman's pressing Clarke for payment.

28 October 1880 Clarke wrote an 'Application for the post of Librarian to the Public Library.

'To the Trustees of the Public Library.

'Gentlemen.

'I have the honour to reply to your advertisement calling for applications for the office of Librarian to the Public Library from persons. – 1. well acquainted with ancient literature and the chief modern languages 2. Having experience in the control of a staff of subordinates, 3 and possessing a knowledge of bibliography.

'I have – 1 – a thorough knowledge – without of course making pretence to 'scholarship' in its highest sense – of the Latin and Greek languages and literature, having read all the books

prescribed by the Universities and being familiar with many others not read in the schools: French is as familiar to me as English. I have read the Spanish and Italian classics and translated for the press both from the French and German. 2. I have for 7 years occupied the position of Sub-librarian at the Public Library my duty being to control the staff. I am happy to say that during the time I have held that responsible position I have never had occasion to call in the aid of the Librarian to support my authority though the admitted efficacy of the staff – the largest of its kind in Australia – vouches for the quality of the discipline maintained. 3. For knowledge of bibliography I may claim special consideration. My personal tastes and public circumstances have alike led me to make that branch of information my peculiar study. Privately I have collected largely while it has been my good fortune to have been entrusted with the compilation of the *Bibliographical Catalogue of the Public Library* which – in my holograph – has been used in stocktaking since 1874, and I have also collated every book and pamphlet which has come into the library for the last 7 years.

‘In addition to these qualifications I beg respectfully to urge the special claim of my present position, and to point out – that I am next in rank to the present Librarian and on his retirement reasonably expect promotion; that I have refused the place of Parliamentary Librarian in the hope of ultimately getting a step in the Institution with which I have been connected for 10 years, and that although the President fairly told me when I informed him of the offer of the Government that I must not consider myself as possessing an indisputable right to the office now to be vacant he did not ignore the spirit of the resolution passed by the Trustees *in April 1873*, when my post of Secretary was filled on my promotion, by the gentleman now holding it, that – vacancies should be filled whenever possible by members of the existing staff according to seniority.

‘I have the honour to be

‘Gentlemen

‘Your most obedient servant

‘Marcus Clarke.’

There were thirty-seven applicants. Clarke was one of the three candidates seriously considered; the other two were W. H. Archer, formerly Registrar-General, and Francis Bride, the assistant University Librarian. Clarke’s chances were not good. His controversy with the Bishop of Melbourne and his involvement in *The Happy Land* had made him some powerful new enemies with both the conservatives and the radical Berry government. His former enemy James Smith, having been made a Trustee of the Library in July 1880, was appointed a member of the committee to make a selection from the applications for the position of Librarian on 4 November, Lurline Stuart notes in her doctoral thesis. And he was now without any influential patrons amongst the library trustees. Sir Charles Gavan Duffy had resigned as Speaker in the Victorian parliament in December 1879 and returned to Europe in February 1880, settling in Nice. 23 November 1880 Sir Redmond Barry, having sentenced Ned Kelly to death, died twelve days after Kelly was executed. ‘I will see you there where I go!’ Kelly had promised him. Clarke, Mackinnon records, ‘on hearing of Sir Redmond’s death, expressed himself as having lost his

best and most influential friend.’ Another of Clarke’s friends, the opera producer William Saurin Lyster, died 27 November.



30 November 1880 G.W., probably George Walstab, wrote in the *Camperdown Chronicle*: ‘The Exhibition flags were at half-mast on the 23rd, and not only the Exhibition Flags, but others all over the city. A good old man had gone to his long home. Poor Sir Redmond Barry. We shall miss him much. He was the lean ideal of a real English gentleman – and “a judge,” as I once heard a detective say – “a judge that the criminal classes preferred to be tried before.” There is something almost ludicrous in this, and yet, oh reader! place yourself (metaphorically of course) in the dock, and I believe you would rather be calmly sentenced to seven years by one of Nature’s nobility than accept half the term and a vulgar slangwhanging from the tongue of an upstart protégé of some conscienceless Government.

‘Of all the grim and ghastly jokes with which the gossips of a big city are wont to ward off ennui commend me to the statement boldly circulated throughout Melbourne that Sir Redmond’s fatal carbuncle was under the left ear – “just the place where the hangman’s knot is adjusted, you know,” as I heard one block stroller explain to the other – finishing up his hideous lie with a reference to the tiger-at-bay taunt of the murderous wretch, Ned Kelly, in which he challenged the late judge to meet him at a certain awful judgment seat ...

‘It is strange that one of the last acts of Sir Redmond Barry’s life was to painfully visit the Public Library to preside at a meeting of trustees called for the purpose of appointing a successor to the present librarian, who has asked to retire on his pension. There have been many new trustees appointed lately, and their ideas have not always been in harmony with those of Sir Redmond, who, to use his own expression, “liked old books to read, old wine to drink, and old friends to help,” and in place of Mr Marcus Clarke, the well known litterateur, who has been sub-librarian of the Public Library for nearly twelve years, and who was looked upon by the whole literary world of Victoria as the legitimate successor of his chief, recommended the late Mr W. H. Archer, the late Registrar-General. Mr Archer is a Catholic (converted), and a strong party politician. The next favourite among the new men was Mr Bride, the assistant librarian at the University, who contested an election for three hundred a year, the “professors” supporting him strongly. The Government, I understand, will refuse to confirm the recommendation of Mr Archer, who has just received £2,500 compensation. Marcus Clarke, who has a habit of taking life epigrammatically, was at the French play when the news arrived of the decision of the trustees. He shrugged his shoulders, and smiled sweetly. When the curtain fell the French officer who had been sitting next to Marcus handed round to his friends the following *mot*: —

‘A.B.C.

‘A was an Archer, who shot for the “gold,”

‘B was a Bride, to be purchased and sold.

‘C was a Clerk, with a quill dipped in gall,

‘Who could kill, if it pleased him, Bride, Archer, and all.’



Captain Standish was also in difficulties. He resigned as Chief Commissioner of Police in 1880, before the committee of enquiry into police failures in dealing with the Kelly gang was convened. Friends arranged for him to become chairman of the Victoria Racing Club, a position he held until his death at the Melbourne Club on 13 March 1883, from ‘fatty degeneration of the heart’ and ‘cirrhosis of the liver’ according to this death certificate. His obituary in *The Australasian*, 24 March, declared: ‘When in the full vigour of his health, Captain Standish was credited with the possession of considerable ability as an administrator, but during his closing years he evidenced a loss of firmness which resulted in the police force falling into a state of disorder. This became painfully manifest during the Kelly outbreak, when the conduct of the pursuit was carried out in a manner which led to severe reflections being cast on the higher officers of the force.’

John Sadleir reflected on Standish in *Recollections of a Victorian Police Officer*: ‘I have spoken of evil friendships, but his devotion to Frank Hare was of another kind – it was like the love of Jonathan for David. It was almost pathetic to see, during the months Captain Standish spent at Benalla in the Kelly time, how restless and uneasy he became were Hare out of his company. I have seen Standish on the top rail of a fence watching anxiously for Hare’s return from a short ride of a mile or two. He said to me he was in constant fear some accident should happen to him. Looking back on those days, I think I see in this exaggerated affection another symptom of that mental trouble under which he quite broke down a very few years later. Not that I desire to deny that Hare had some very fine and attractive qualities, but this inordinate affection had its ill-effects in increasing Hare’s already too pronounced egotism, and in the case of Standish himself it led him into the most ill-judged action of his career, the superseding of Nicholson by Hare at a most critical point in the Kelly pursuit.’



8 January 1881 a Melbourne correspondent of the Sydney *Bulletin* reported: ‘There is a mighty struggle going on about the vacant billet of the Public Librarian. Archer, one of our Black Wednesday dismissals, and late of your city, has been nominated by the Trustees, but the Government won’t have him – nominally because of some compensation he has received, but virtually because he don’t suit their ideas. *The Age* is trying to billet Marcus Clarke (now Sub-Librarian), one of their contributing staff, and it is said that one of the last acts Sir Redmond Barry did was to advocate Clarke’s claim, and he was no mean judge!!!’

21 January 1881 the Melbourne *Bulletin* reported: ‘Marcus Clarke’s favourite sport at the pistol gallery is to break a pipe held between the marker’s fingers. He did this four times running last week. Can it be that he is practicing for Archer?’

Archer, born in London in 1825, was a Catholic convert, a friend of Julian Tenison Woods and a member of the Yorick. His daughter Grace was married to Gavan Duffy’s son Philip.

5 February the *Sydney Bulletin* reported further: ‘Rumours are rife in our literary circles. Departures of noted ones are talked about. It is whispered that if he does not get the librarianship at the Public Library, Marcus Clarke intends taking up his bed and walking, shaking, however, the dust off his feet before doing so ...’ Things were going wrong for Clarke, Elliott records. From 15 January to 12 February 1881 *The Leader* serialized his translation from the French of George Eliot’s ‘The Lifted Veil’. He had been under the impression it had never appeared in English. It had, way back in 1859. David Blair wrote to the *Daily Telegraph* that this demonstrated Clarke’s unfitness for the post of librarian. 30 April Clarke contributed an obituary of the novelist Ouida to *The Leader*, but she lived on for another quarter century until 1908.

Arthur Patchett Martin recalls in *Temple Bar*: ‘He was always glad to use his press influence to bring into prominence the merits of any rising writer, and his advice to such was more kindly than one might have expected from one of his temperament. At the same time, his scorn for pretentious mediocrity or respectable stupidity was unbounded. To him it was a grievous offence for a person, who lacked the literary faculty, to rush – or rather limp – into print and expect recognition on account of social position or even academic standing. Nor did he fail to publish, wherever a newspaper proprietor would permit him, his contempt for such pretenders; and this, in a community like Victoria, made him a host of enemies. When an English earl condescended to contribute to the pages of a Melbourne magazine, “colonial society” was awe-struck, and did its best to be interested in the dull article, so that its *amour propre* was hurt when the critic lightly referred to “the feeble placidity of the good old earl,” and to his “noble balderdash.”

‘By similar writings, which, though anonymous, might just as well have been signed, he alienated that great class whom Lord Beaconsfield so cordially disliked and described as “Superior Persons,” and his chances of being chosen Public Librarian were utterly destroyed. But he was simply following that strong literary instinct which impels brilliant men to compose from day to day their *Dunciad*. And yet all the while he was penning these sneers, he would be taking an infinite deal of trouble to spread the fame of Adam Lindsay Gordon or Henry Kendall.’



Orders for Kendall’s *Songs from the Mountains* were coming in. Kendall wrote to Parkes 27 October 1880: ‘Your generous order for 50 copies will be promptly attended to.’ 8 December he wrote to McCrae: ‘Don’t worry yourself about subscribers for my book. The printing and binding cost me £100; but copies to the amount of £140 have been ordered. You will therefore see that I am on the safe side. The volume is out by this time, and you shall have a copy by the earliest opportunity.’

Kendall nonetheless felt that he had not achieved what he should have done. In ‘After Many Years,’ the concluding poem of the collection, he wrote:

The song that once I dreamed about
The tender, touching thing
As radiant as the rose without –

The love of wind and wing –
 The perfect verses to the tune
 Of woodland music set,
 As beautiful as afternoon
 Remain unwritten yet.

Meanwhile Kendall kept a watchful eye on the subscriptions. W. H. Wilde notes that he wrote to William Maddock, the publisher, 12 December: 'There are some relatives of mine that you may have heard of. Do not entertain applications not endorsed by me.' 17 December he wrote again: 'I do not give tick to Government clerks – so make these fellows pay. Some of them are good marks – but treat all alike.'

Reed recorded in 'Kendall's Satiric Humour': 'He laboriously copied out by hand the some three thousand lines the book contains and arranged with the publisher, William Maddock, to send his copy direct to the printers and to read his own proofs. Maddock, thinking he was publishing a literary work by a leading Australian poet, did not read the poems, and was horrified when, having sent out over 200 copies to subscribers, he was warned by W. B. Dalley to whom one had come for review that it contained a poem which was potentially libellous.' The poem was 'The Song of Ninian Melville.'

Mister Melville – straight descendant from Professor Huxley's ape,
 Started life as mute for Daddy pulling faces, sporting crape,
 But alas! He didn't like it – lots of work and little pay.
 Nature whispered, you're a windbag, play your cards another way ...

Thornton's Column was his platform; here our orator began
 Hitting at the yellow heathen – cracking up the 'working man' –
 Spitting out at Immigration ...

Maddock promptly recalled every copy he could, writing to Kendall, 28 December: 'After this, I shall certainly never again undertake to publish any work unless I have the author's copy given me previous to its being in the hands of the printer.'

The bookseller James Tyrrell recalled: 'Jack Lockley told me that, as message-boy at Maddock's, he personally delivered to subscribers about one hundred copies of the book before word came to the shop that Melville was about to launch legal proceedings. G. B. Philip named a higher figure than one hundred as having been delivered, which could also be right; Melville may have thus seen an earlier copy.

'Jack was promptly sent out to retrace his steps and retrieve the delivered copies. He told me he did manage to collect all but perhaps half a dozen; one copy – like most other such rarities – is now in the Mitchell Library.'

28 December Kendall wrote to McCrae: 'Just now I am worried and not well. My volume came out about twelve days ago; but was almost immediately withdrawn from sale. This was owing to a political satire in it which frightened the chicken-hearted publisher. I have been obliged to supply a new poem to take the place of the satire; and the edition will be reissued in a

few days. All the newspapers here are on my side; and, owing to the row about lampoon there is a great demand for the book. Nearly £200 worth of copies has been ordered. I have to stand the cost of republishing. When republication takes place, I will send you a copy.

‘Christmas is a sad time with men of our temperament; still, my dear McCrae, I wish you all sorts of possible joy.’

28 December Kendall wrote to Swan: ‘I am glad to get your photo. It is in our family album between ... Marcus Clarke and Brunton Stephens.’



January 1881 Kendall moved some fifty kilometres south from Camden Haven to Cundletown, north-east of Taree, preparing to take up his Inspectorship of Forests in April. His son Frederick recalled in ‘Henry Kendall at Cundle Town, 1881’ in the *Manning River Times*, 27 May 1939: ‘We rented “Cliff Cottage”, a comfortable weatherboard place of four or five rooms on the main street, nearly opposite the old School of Arts.’ According to the *Cundletown Self-Guided Heritage Walk Historic Plaques*, Kendall purchased lot 11 on Main Street, but ‘he moved from this location to a house situated behind the Methodist Church in Edward Street as this site was too noisy for him to concentrate on his poetry’. Henry’s association with Cundletown is commemorated by a monument in the Kendall Reserve, River Street.

Frederick recorded: ‘Although Cundletown was by modern standards a mere village, with about 500 inhabitants, it seemed to me then a wonder-town after years spent in a forest clearing at Camden Haven. Here were incredible shops, stocked with unimagined treasures, rows of houses, one actually two storeys (Else’s the sadler), an imposing “furniture arcade” (Buchell’s), no less than four churches, and, above all, a School of Arts with a real library ... This was life for us after our rural seclusion and we took to it as ducks to water ... My father, shortly after his arrival while awaiting the confirmation of his appointment, did some literary work for Sydney journals, including *The Bulletin* and the [Sydney] *University Review*. He wrote for the *Manning River Times* a poem on “The Beautiful Manning”, and a prose article, “My New Home” My father also lectured on “Early Australian Discovery” at the School of Arts in April, when the Rev W. E. Hawkins presided, and there was an appreciative audience, for my father was a capable speaker ...

‘I recall that my father, while waiting for the employment he so desired for the sake of his loved ones, grew somewhat restless and moody. He was used to constant occupation. He would, however, mostly relieve the tedium of delay by a ramble in the surrounding bushland, or a trip to Taree. One of his favourite haunts was the high ground about the Dawson River where there is a spot still called “Kendall’s Lookout”.’ Frederick recalled that ‘my mother’s closest friend was perhaps Mrs Walter Nunn, wife of the telegraph master’, adding the literary detail ‘she was very musical and was a distant relative of the poet Shelley.’

12 January 1881 Dalley’s lengthy review of Kendall’s *Songs from the Mountains* appeared in the *Sydney Morning Herald*: ‘He has been for a number of years engaged in very humble employment, at a distance from this city, and in a place where, except from his own presence, there must necessarily be an absence of all grace and dignity of life. And yet it is impossible to read this volume without being deeply sensible that the author has not only used poetry as Mr

Keble, in his university lectures, indicated that it should be used, “as a method of relieving the over-burdened mind, and a channel through which emotion finds a safe regulated expression,” but that he has a perfect familiarity with some of the latest and many of the finest examples of the literature of his own country ...

‘There is much genuine pathos in more than one of the pieces which manifestly owe their origin to circumstances of domestic sorrow. There is no feeble effort to jest amidst tears (that perfect “note,” as is said, of a poisoned imagination); and the veil of home affliction is tenderly and delicately uplifted by the graceful and trembling hands of one who has suffered. The poem entitled “Araluen” is an example ...

‘Mr Kendall has published in this volume a few pieces which reveal his powers as a humorist, and which are at the same time racy of the soil. His pictures of this kind are as perfect in colouring as those of Bret Harte of the Sierras of California.’

21 January the *Herald*’s ‘Melbourne Letter’ remarked: ‘in respect of Australian talent, some of us who have read Henry Kendall’s new book are greatly impressed with the genius therein exhibited. When Kendall was in Melbourne some years ago he puzzled us all. We could not tell whether to place him among great poets or undeveloped children. He is a great poet, and some day, if he will only try, he will write a great poem, whether dramatic, epic, or lyric I cannot forecast; but he will certainly write it if he live long enough, and if he gather together all his forces, and fling his soul into his words ...’

22 January 1881 *The Bulletin* published a three column feature article about Kendall – something usually reserved for politicians – declaring that he was ‘without qualification or envy ... the uncrowned laureate of Australia’. In the same issue a review of *Songs from the Mountains* called it ‘a work which by its intrinsic merit, both as regards scholarship and poetic conception, is designed to case a radiance upon Australian literature’.

He was not well. 4 February 1881 he wrote to Swan from Cundletown: ‘My illness is the result of six years of overwork. Here I am resting and slowly recovering. At present it is out of my power to write.’ 9 February he wrote to McCrae: ‘It pains me to hear of your neuralgia, for I know what it is. It is to be hoped that you are O.K. now. I have ordered the publisher to send you four copies of my book – one of them being a gift. You can send the coin for the other three to the publisher. The price is 6/8 each.’ A week later, 16 February, he wrote to McCrae: As I have made £80 by my book I am perfectly indifferent to *The Australasian*.’

Joan Fenton notes that Kendall inscribed a copy of the book to Peter Fagan: ‘I give this book to Peter Fagan, one of three noble brothers who led me out of Gethsemane. Henry Kendall. 4 May 1881.’



26 February 1881 *The Argus* published a letter from Robert Wallen, the stockbroker journalist who had initiated the ‘Under the Verandah’ column in *The Leader*, announcing the Art Union of Victoria’s publication of Kendall’s *Orara* as ‘an illustrated poem’: ‘A literary work on an Australian subject, by an Australian poet, illustrated by Australian artists, issued by Australian

publishers, for an Australian society, in aid of Australian art, has, I plead, some claim on the sympathy of the Australian public. This will be shown in a practical way by the sending of a guinea subscription forthwith ... Besides the presentation work and a chance of an original picture from the prize list, each subscriber this year is entitled to a free admission for the season to the exhibition of the Victorian Academy of Arts, which opens early next month.'

The ninth in the Art Union's annual series, *Orara* featured thirteen lithographed engravings illustrating Kendall's poem from the artists J. W. Curtis, Henry Reilly, John Gully, W. Ford, C. D. Richardson, Malcolm Campbell, Eliza Parsons, Chester Earles, Julian Ashton and Tom Roberts. Tom Roberts later painted a posthumous portrait of Kendall, now in Parliament House, Canberra. There are further portraits of Kendall by W. H. Gocher, C. J. Moroney and John McCormack. The *Illustrated Sydney News* published an engraving of the poet, 2 September 1882.

19 March 1881 Clarke wrote on Kendall and Brunton Stephens for *The Leader*. The point was less literary criticism than to offer some positive words about an old contemporary's work. It was in the nature of a journalistic puff. He cited some works from Kendall's earlier collection, *Leaves from Australian Forests*, and quoted a passage from *Orara*. Together with reflections on debt and hardship, Clarke offered some reminiscences of Kendall in Melbourne twelve years earlier:

'Those who know the dreamy, unpractical, ways of poets and romancers will understand that the attempt to live by the sale of his poetry was not wholly successful. I remember him as he appeared in Melbourne during that Bohemian experience: a slight figure, with conventional garments, worn so unconventionally that they appeared almost ludicrous. He was of course welcomed by all literary men; but welcome, however sincere, is not bread and cheese. There were others dependant on the divine afflatus and I fear that the poet and his devoted wife had often hard times of it. It was not to be supposed that first-class poetry could be produced under these conditions. When a man sees those dear to him in want for comforts, if not of necessities; when that terrible pit of temptation, from the bottom of which arise the vulgar voices of insult, mockery and threat, yawns wide to swallow all soothful leisure, and much of self respect, he sometimes loses momentary hold of the stay of reason, and believes the light of his poetic star is quenched for ever. At this time of his life Kendall was very like Clarence Mangan, as Sir Charles Gavan Duffy, in *Young Ireland*, describes that eccentric son of genius. Happily, unlike Mangan, he lived to see the force of his talent triumph, and to look back upon his time of trouble only as an ugly dream.'

As with his preface to that other contemporary of those years of the Yorick, Gordon, Clarke's critical analysis was brief and succinct. Recalling Gordon, he contrasted his work with Henry Kendall's muse: 'The prevailing note of Kendall's poetry is regret. He writes as one wandering amid alien spirits, and ever sighing for some lost companionship. He feels the loveliness of flower and leaf, but celebrates their beauty with no joyous note ... No lofty aspirations breathe in his verses. His is no Pindaric trumpet-call to battle with evil and thrust for freedom ... his attempts to depict the excitement of a cattle drive are as moonlight unto sunlight before one of A. L. Gordon's berserker outbursts. But for melody and tenderness, for gloom and sadness, some of his poems have not been excelled by any writer of English be he who he may.'

Clarke expressed some reservations about reissuing the same poem under a different name: 'It may be here noted as being worth some explanation by the secretary of the Art Union that "Orara" is nothing more nor less than the "Glen of Arrawatta," published in *Leaves from Australian Forests*, issued by George Robertson. The practice of reprinting ballads or stories under different titles is not new, but the antiquity of its origin does not excuse it. Why could not the poem – it gained a prize offered by the proprietor of the *Australian Magazine*, the judge being Mr R. H. Horne – have been given to Victorians again under its old title? To quit the close pursuit of this question, however, we are sure that the compliment paid to Mr Kendall by the Victorian Art Union will be appreciated by his admirers in New South Wales. Victorians are credited, or discredited, with being jealous of their older cousins, and prone to unduly glorify their own *literati*. The selection of Henry Kendall's work by a Victorian jury may go some little way to wipe out this stigma. But no matter what may be felt in his native colony, nor by what name his poem may be called, the author of "Orara" may rest assured that he has many friends in the city which witnessed the publication of his first volume, and that, should he visit us, he will be frankly welcomed by men who not only appreciate his talent, but sympathize with his successful struggle to overcome those obstacles which lie in the path of every poor and sensitive son of genius.'



2 April 1881 Kendall wrote to McCrae: 'I am glad you like my little book. I have sent Clarke a copy. Did you see his paper on Stephens and myself published in *The Leader*? Why do you not chance a volume? Surely to God a bloated Govt. swell like you must have money! The first edition of my book – 1000 copies – has gone off. Poetry of the highest class – such as yours is – might hang fire a little; but it would bring you coin as well as kudos in the long run.' He added a postscript: 'I forgot to mention that I am about to receive the newly created office of "Superintendent of State Forests" here. The screw is £500 per annum. Remember me to what is left of the old crowd.' Clarke replied to Kendall's gift of his book with 'a genial letter', Kendall told McCrae, 20 August.

19 May 1881 the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported: 'Mr Henry Kendall, the well-known Australian poet, has been appointed by the Government Inspector of State Forests. The appointment is a new one, and the duties appertaining to the position will be those of a head forest ranger, or of an officer who is required to examine the condition of the natural forests of the colony, and to report upon their present state and the facilities at hand for their preservation, and for planting out forest trees in suitable places. For some five or six years past Mr Kendall has been residing at Camden Haven, and during that time he has devoted himself in a singular manner the study of this question, forming the acquaintance of timber-getters, and acquiring a thorough knowledge of forestry.'

In 1982 the Forestry Commission of New South Wales recognized Kendall's role with the establishment of the Henry Kendall Collection of Fine Wood Arts and Crafts at OTC House, Sydney.

Kendall owed his appointment to Parkes' good offices, and as a public servant had to cease writing political and satirical contributions to the press, just as Clarke had had to eleven years earlier. The job proved demanding and involved travelling considerable distances on horseback in all weathers to report on state forest reserves. From May till August he was in the northern Richmond River area, and became ill. His son Orara was born on 19 June. He now had six children, like Clarke. His health was deteriorating.

His reports were conscientious and perceptive: 'I quite believe that the destruction of forests means the destruction of arable country. Trees not only draw down rain but they arrest the rich vegetable matter brought down by flooded rivers and so are the means of fertilizing the country. Where forests have been destroyed floods not only carry off the alluvium brought from the mountains – they gradually wash away all the loose rich surface soil they pass over. The disastrous consequences must of course seriously affect society.'

James Tyrrell quotes a letter Kendall wrote to J. F. Archibald at *The Bulletin*, 5 June 1881: 'I am glad to hear from you. Being obliged to start for Port Macquarie this evening, I cannot let you have the poem you kindly ask for before, say, eight days at latest. I have been on horseback so much lately that poor Gordon's matter has been out of my power. It will, however, be a labour of deep love to attend to it.'

'I hear that Ninny and many other members of parliament of his breed intend to work against me at the next meeting of the hat shop. This rumour makes me anxious; but I depend upon the friendship of *The Bulletin* and that of all other great papers of the colony.'

'The result of the late "libel" case will be a great lift to your brilliant journal. Your circulation must now increase at a fourfold rate. In my wanderings I will, of course, do my best for you. In "nailing" Traill you have secured a good man.' Traill, who had left *The Brisbane Courier* and *Queenslander* to join *The Sydney Mail*, had now been recruited to the new *Bulletin*.



Cyril Hopkins tells a story of Clarke at this time: 'A bailiff had been sent to his house to take possession of his goods and chattels on behalf of his creditors. It was not, alas! the first visit of its kind. Mrs Clarke, returning home from a walk in the course of a certain afternoon, found to her surprise on re-entering her house, a stranger entertaining the children. He rose and greeted her politely but – as it seemed to her – with considerable embarrassment and proceeded to explain the meaning of his presence speaking in a low tone of voice and in such a manner as not to rouse the suspicions of the children. In possession of this unwelcome intelligence she naturally took the first opportunity that offered of asking Marcus how it was that he had again allowed matters to come to such a pass? Her distress was great and it was with downright astonishment that even she (despite her knowledge of the surprises of Marcus's character) heard him reply, with a ringing laugh, and in the very language of his schooldays, "Where is my festive Cuss? I'll settle him!"'

'She implored him to be discreet but on learning that the bailiff was in the kitchen, he immediately rushed in and before the astonished functionary had time to recover from his surprise

and collect his scattered wits, had slapped him with gentle familiarity on the back and greeted him with the following extraordinary words of welcome, “Hallo, John, how are you, my boy! Didn’t expect to see you so soon – how’s the family?” a greeting followed-up by a rapid glance and gesture of explanation to the servant-maid and the announcement in a matter-of-fact tone to the children (as if affording information unwittingly forgotten by him) that the stranger was their “Uncle John, from – the East” (he added vaguely) whose visit (as they would probably surmise from his manner) was not quite unexpected by their parents but of the date of whose arrival they had doubtless been uncertain.

‘The maid looked suspicious, and Mrs Clarke rather aghast, as her husband hurriedly escorted this newly discovered relative of his into the dining-room insisting that he must give him the pleasure of his society at dinner. During the progress of the meal Marcus, who had taken the measure of his man, aided by the effect of the viands and the wine with which he plied him, had succeeded in effecting such a change in the demeanour of his strange guest by his conversation and personal charm that at a later period of the evening. Mrs Clarke overheard snatches of conversation and peals of laughter issuing from Marcus’s study to which they had adjourned for coffee and cigars. Thus encouraged, she entered to find the two men on the friendliest possible terms: the bailiff convulsed with laughter and somewhat excited by the wine with which he had been liberally regaled, expressing in rather unparliamentary language his appreciation of some anecdote with which Marcus had just entertained him, for he proved to be a man of some little education, at least of sufficient to be able to appreciate Marcus Clarke’s humorous sallies.

‘The result of all these manoeuvres was that the immediate difficulties occasioned by the bailiff’s presence in the house were for the time being surmounted and that for the next few days “Uncle John from the East” chopped wood and did odd jobs about the house – in short played up to the part of the hardly expected but welcome guest so strangely thrust upon him until, for some reason I am unable to give, but which is comparatively immaterial, he saw fit to take his departure confiding to a friend (as it afterwards transpired) that sooner than see Marcus Clarke suffer, he would prefer to go to prison himself.’



Cyril says the story was told to him by a member of Clarke’s family, and that the incident occurred within some months of his death. Whether it was true remains uncertain. Clarke may have found it convenient to put into practice a version of what was a well-established urban legend. A similar story appears in the second paragraph of Bulwer Lytton’s novel *Pelham; or, Adventures of a Gentleman*, published in 1828. There the bailiff who has come to repossess Lady Frances’ diamonds is introduced as young Pelham’s tutor when, in order to keep his eye on the jewels, he escorts Lady Frances in public.

Another version of the story appears in Clarke’s play *Baby’s Luck*, and was likewise not original with Clarke. 6 March 1879 *The Argus* had published a letter, ‘A Stolen “Baby”’ from Anti-plagiarist: ‘What was called in the playbills a dramatic sketch by Mr Marcus Clarke, entitled

Baby's Luck, was produced at the Academy of Music for the first (and in all probability for the last) time on Monday night. It would not be worth while "resurrecting" a piece which was so thoroughly damned on its first representation, but that I desire to set all the critics right as to the first cause of its failure. That was only another illustration of the truth (which any old lady will verify) that no changeling can possibly thrive. In this case Mr Marcus Clarke borrowed his baby, head, legs, arms, and body, from Miss Braddon (it was only a literary offspring, remember), and all he attempted to do was to make it talk in his own way – an essay the success of which we have seen the audience, at all events, did not seem to appreciate the language of this "philosopher's baby."

'Leaving metaphor, I desire to point out simply that Mr Clarke took, without the slightest acknowledgment, every incident in his piece from a little story by Miss Braddon, called "Christmas in Possession," in a volume entitled *Weavers and Weft*, which, like all the other stories of this popular authoress, can be seen in any bookshop in Melbourne. The plagiarism was a daring one for Mr Clarke, who has an opportunity of obtaining his materials from less generally accessible sources, and in a clever rechauffé work is not usually so readily recognized ...'

Clarke replied, 7 March: 'Allow me to thank your correspondent, "Anti-plagiarist," for calling your attention to the fact that I am the author of the dramatic sketch *Baby's Luck*, produced at the Academy of Music on Monday last. "Anti-plagiarist," however, is in error when he assumes that the plot of the piece was taken from Miss Braddon. The original story is to be found in *Paris Pour Rire* – a bundle of clever things, by some nameless genius, which is really quite invaluable to writers of "original English comedy." If your correspondent can snatch a moment from his literary labours and lunch with me on any day he likes to name, I shall be happy to show him the volume.'

In April 1881 Clarke's cantata, *Proi: or, At the Dawning*, with music by Paolo Giorza, was performed at the Melbourne Exhibition. It had been written in 1873–74. Life was no longer dawning for Clarke. 'Some months before the end came, the never strong constitution of my friend began to give forth ominous signs of an early break-up,' Mackinnon wrote. 'The once-active brain became by degrees more lethargic, and the work which at one time could be executed with rapidity and force, became a task too vast to be undertaken without great effort.'



12 April 1881, the same day that Kendall was appointed Inspector of State Forests, Clarke declared an affidavit in relation to his insolvency.

4 May *The Argus* reported: 'A case was set down in the list of the Insolvency Court business yesterday in which Mr Marcus Clarke, assistant librarian of the Public Library, had given notice of his intention to apply to the court to set aside a debtor a summons taken out against him by Mr Aaron Waxman to recover an alleged debt of £298 10s.'

5 May *The Argus* reported Mr Topp's argument on behalf of Clarke: 'That about August 1879, he entered into an agreement with Waxman to the effect that Waxman should advance him a

sufficient sum of money to pay off all his creditors, and he (Clarke) should give Waxman a deed under seal, whereby he was to covenant to give Waxman certain orders, known as II orders to enable Waxman to receive the whole of his salary for a period of time sufficient to repay his debt and interest, and that he should also, as a further security, give Waxman his promissory notes payable on demand. That he (Clarke) carried out the terms of that agreement, and gave Waxman a list of his creditors, Waxman himself being the principal one. That the said agreement was acted upon until March 1880 Waxman receiving the whole of his salary, and that in March 1880, a fresh agreement was made whereby Waxman was to pay Clarke £17 10s. per month out of his salary which amounted to £37 10s. per month. Waxman at this time informed Clarke that the balance due to him amounted to £100 or thereabouts, and he executed a fresh deed for Waxman to receive his salary and also gave him two promissory notes payable on demand, one for £250 and the other for £150 and also gave him an additional number of II orders to cover the amount which he then alleged to be due to him. That from the time of that agreement to February 1881, Waxman received his (Clarke's) salary amounting in the whole to £375. That the list of creditors furnished by Clarke to Waxman contained the name of George Sutton, whose debt was to be paid in full by Waxman, but in February of this year he (Clarke) discovered that Waxman had only been paying Sutton monthly instalments, some of which he had charged against him (Clarke) and that on such discovery he called a meeting of his creditors, and by their direction stopped payment of any outstanding II orders, and handed his salary to the person appointed by the creditors to receive the same, and distribute it rateably amongst his creditors. That since February 7 last he had received an account from Waxman claiming a balance due of £303 17s. 4d. That the said account commenced as on the 10th April 1880, the balance due at that date being £407 7s. 4d., and having discovered that so grave an error had been made as to surcharge him with the payments to the said George Sutton his creditors and himself were desirous of ascertaining that no similar error was made with respect to the other creditors. That when he signed the two promissory notes he believed the £400 was then due to Waxman, and that he was now advised that, after getting credit for the £375 received by Waxman, he now owed him less than £50, and was only indebted to him in the sum of £25 and interest.'

After a week's adjournment *The Argus*, 24 May, reported Mr Braham's case for Waxman: 'Waxman claimed the amount due on two bills of change which Clarke had given to Waxman in March 1880, for £100 altogether, under the condition that Waxman should receive Clarke's salary, amounting to £37 10s. per month, and pay Clarke £17 10s. out of it. Clarke had filed an affidavit setting forth that Waxman had received his salary for 10 months on II orders given by Clarke, and had paid him £17 10s. per month out of it, but also stating that Waxman had received £375 of his money, which was incorrect, as he had only received £200 according to Clarke's own showing, without counting interest or any payments he had made on Clarke's account.

'The concluding paragraph of Clarke's affidavit said that he only owed Waxman £25, which on the face of it was wrong, and the affidavit, he (Mr Braham) contended, was quite insufficient to induce the Court to dismiss the summons.

‘Mr Topp said that Mr Waxman had not gone on a question of general indebtedness or they would have been prepared to meet that view, and show that Clarke did not owe the money mentioned, in which case Waxman would have been out of court. Waxman had gone on the two bills of March 1880, for £100 together, and Clarke had filed an affidavit showing that Waxman had received £375, which left only £25 to pay on the two bills, or less than the sum of £50, for which amount and upwards debtors’ summonses only could be taken out.

‘Mr Braham said the debtor could not swear that he was entitled to credit for £375 on the promissory notes, because the debtor himself had received from Waxman £175, leaving only £200 to Waxman. There was therefore sufficient owing to enable the creditor to take out a debtors’ summons.’

Clarke’s application was dismissed. 20 June 1881 *The Argus* reported: ‘Order *nisi* for the sequestration of the estate of Marcus Clarke, of Melbourne.

‘Mr Topp moved the order absolute. The respondent appeared personally to show cause, stating that he had not had an opportunity to employ counsel, as he believed till late last night the affair would have been settled.

‘The act of insolvency alleged was that a debtor summons had been obtained against the respondent at the instance of Aaron Waxman, and that the respondent had not paid the debt or compounded for it. Mr Waxman said that in April 1880, he and Mr Clarke had a settlement of accounts, and that Mr Clarke then gave him two bills, one for £250 endorsed by Mr Baillièrè, the other for £150 – making a total of £400. Mr Clarke gave him an assignment over his salary as assistant librarian, authorizing him to receive his salary (£37 10s. per month) till the amount was paid. He drew the salary for some months, retaining £20 and paying Mr Clarke £17 10s. monthly. As the account now stood, he said that Mr Clarke now owed him £298 10s.

‘Mr Clarke cross examined Mr Waxman as to the circumstances under which the bills were given. He denied that he had only advanced £300 and charged £100 for interest. He had not charged any interest.

‘Mr Clarke: Is it your usual practice not to charge interest?

‘Witness: I did not charge you any. I did agree to pay off certain of your creditors, and I did pay all whose names you wrote down. I did not agree to pay a person named Sutton. His name is not on the list, but I did pay him something.

‘Mr Clarke complained that he had not been able to get any account from Mr Waxman as to how he stood. The consideration for the bills was that Mr Waxman should pay his creditors, but he had not carried it out and therefore he submitted that the consideration for the bills had failed.

‘Mr Topp said that in any aspect Mr Clarke owed more than £50 and that was sufficient to establish the petitioning creditor’s debt.

‘Mr Clarke said that he admitted owing £25 on the bills and no more.

‘Mr Topp stated that that was on the assumption that Mr Waxman had got the whole £37 10s. monthly, whereas he only got £20.

‘Mr Clarke asked his Honour to postpone the case for a week so as to enable him to get proper accounts from Mr Waxman.

‘His Honour said that if there was any suggestion that less than £50 was due he would postpone the case. But he could not make this an exception to the usual practice. This did not determine the amount for which the creditor could claim. In the Insolvent Court there could be an inquiry as to how much was really due.

‘Mr Clarke asked if the Court could now order someone to examine the books and see what was due.

‘His Honour said he had no power to do that.

‘The order for sequestration was then made absolute.’



The minutes of the Library record 2 June: ‘The consideration of the position of the Sub-Librarian in reference to his recent insolvency was referred to the General Body of Trustees.’

6 July Dr Francis Bride was appointed Librarian.

7 July the minutes note: ‘To consider and order on the position of the Sub-Librarian in reference to his recent insolvency. Referred by the Library Committee to the General body of Trustees.’ 21 July the minutes note: ‘The position of the Sub-Librarian in reference to his late insolvency. Resolved: That Mr Marcus Clarke be requested to place his resignation in the hands of the President.’

Mackinnon writes: ‘The hand of death was already upon him, as he himself too well knew, and frequently remarked, during the last few weeks of his life – notably on the Queen’s birthday, preceding his decease; when, walking with a friend in the vicinity of the Yarra Bend asylum, he mournfully remarked, “Which shall it be – the mad asylum or the pauper grave? Let a toss of the coin decide – head, grave; tail, asylum.” And forthwith a florin was tossed, and fell tail uppermost. “Not if I know it, my festive coin. No gibbering idiot shall I e’er be; rather the gleeful gallows tree.”’



2 August 1881 Marcus Clarke died. He was thirty-five. A death mask is preserved in the State Library of Victoria. A plaque marks the site of the house in Inkermann Street, St Kilda, where he died.

Mackinnon records: ‘The illness which immediately caused his decease, commenced with an attack of pleurisy, and this developing into congestion of the liver, and finally into erysipelas, carried him off in the space of one short week. Indeed he had, during the last year of his life, suffered so frequently from attacks brought on by a disordered liver, that little heed was given to the final attack till a day or two previous to his death, when the wife, who had so unwearingly attended him night and day, with only the assistance of a literary friend of his, Mr George Walstab – found that matters were more serious than anticipated, and sent for the family physician and friend, Dr Fetherston, and afterwards for an old companion and friend of her husband’s, Dr Patrick Moloney. From the beginning they held out little hope, as the constitution

was utterly worn out, and the mental worry of the latter weeks had completed the task of dissolution. But the dying man himself did not evidently realize his position, even up to the time of the insensibility which preceded death setting in, for only a few hours before his decease he remarked jocularly, to his watchful wife, "When I get up I will be a different man, with a new liver," and then asked for, and put on, his coat. But the end came upon him rapidly. Losing his speech he beckoned for pencil and paper, and, seizing hold of the sheets, moved his hand over them as if writing. Shortly afterwards the mind began to wander, but still the hand continued moving with increasing velocity, and every now and then a futile attempt to speak was made. But the tongue could not utter what the fevered brain wished, apparently, to explain; and then, by degrees, the arms grew weary, the body fell back on the pillows, the large, beautiful eyes, with a far off gaze in them, opened widely, for a second – then closed – and all was over, on this earth, with – Marcus Clarke.'

McCrae wrote to Kendall, 20 August 1881: 'He commenced to write and continued as if writing until he sank and died. I have no doubt but the poor fellow imagined he was turning out something that was to bring a little coin for his wife and children. Hence the continuity of the effort. He called for several of his friends by name, for myself amongst others and when I learned this it was a bitter regret to me that I had not known of his illness and come down in time to see him and to speak to him. The cottage is very bare, nearly everything sold off and with all this there was not at first money sufficient to obtain the necessary medicines – everything came in time but came too late.'

McCrae probably heard the details from George Walstab, who was there. Walstab and Clarke, Elliott notes, had on 1 July begun jointly supplying 'Our Melbourne Correspondence' for the *Ballarat Star*.

J. F. Archibald recalled in the *Lone Hand* in June 1907: 'Why Marcus Clarke died was explained to me long afterwards by his doctor and bosom crony, Pat Moloney, probably the most interesting talker Australia has ever seen.

"I was away when he was taken ill," said Pat, "and before I got back he had gone. He died for want of moral support, for the lack of a fat friend like myself to pull him right out of the arms of Beelzebub, and dump him into the bosom of Abraham. I had saved him twice, not by physic, but by a word and a hand-clasp."

'Big, bright, generous, eloquent Pat Moloney himself passed away in London. When I heard of it, and learned that he died of mere dry rot, for want of something congenial to do, I felt that he also could have been saved by a word and a hand-clasp. O, that I had been there! You will find when you try, as I have done, that the very work which you thought was killing you was really the only thing which kept you alive.'

2 August 1881 Swan wrote to Shillinglaw: 'I would have written to you before this about the death of Marcus but what was the use? From the time I learned it until now he has occupied all my thoughts. I cannot tell you how keen my regret is. I do feel some feeling akin to desolation. I am only beginning to find out how much I loved him – "liked" is not the word. His brilliance and

promise are gone from us and with the exception of yourself who is there to talk to when a fellow goes to Melbourne?

‘My reporter was away for his holidays when I learned the news else nothing could have kept me from being at the funeral. I am scarcely sufficiently known to Mrs Clarke to write to her but you will tell her from me how sincere is my grief. Nothing has occurred in my life during the last fifteen years that I so sorrow over. I knew/know how you will feel it. We have one comfort: in the great majority will be Marcus. For *I* believe in a life hereafter. I was so glad to see you were one of the pall bearers. He had his faults. I never could see them. I preferred to admire him.’



3 August 1881 *The Argus* published an obituary: ‘The death of Mr Marcus Clarke at the early age of 34 will occasion a shock of surprise as well as pain to those who were unprepared for the intelligence by any previous knowledge of his brief but fatal illness. Up to within a few days of his decease he filled the post of sub-librarian of the Melbourne Public Library, from which he withdrew for a time, pending the settlement of some private embarrassments; and there was nothing in the state of his health or in his general appearance until just before his decease to occasion any serious uneasiness to his friends. His illness dated from last Monday week, when he was attacked by congestion of the liver. Complications of a grave nature, amongst which erysipelas was a prominent feature, ensued, and the system broke down under the strain. During the last few days all hope of Mr Clarke’s recovery had been abandoned, and he died yesterday afternoon at his residence, in Inkermann Street, St Kilda.

‘Marcus Clarke was born in the year 1847, in the “old court suburb” of London. He received all the advantages of an excellent education, and at a very early age evinced signs of the ability which he afterwards exhibited as a writer. Related to Colonel (now Sir Andrew) Clarke who was a member of the first Administration under the Victorian Constitution, and to Judge Clarke, the deceased came out to this colony when a very young man, saw something of life on a squatting station, afterwards entered the Bank of Australasia, and gradually drifted into journalism, for which he seemed to feel a natural vocation. He joined the reporting staff of this paper, and subsequently commenced and continued a series of sharp and pungent contributions to *The Australasian* under the signature of the “Peripatetic Philosopher.” These were marked by much vivacity of expression, and by a style which, when it was at its best, resembled that of Alphonse Karr in caustic remark and epigrammatic sparkle. His first novel, entitled *Long Odds*, was published in 1868, and viewed in connexion with the fact that it was the work of a man of only one-and-twenty, was a remarkable performance, and full of promise. Five years later he produced *His Natural Life*, a work of fiction founded on a solid groundwork of fact, and illustrating the horrors of the old penal settlement at Port Arthur. It was republished in London, where it was most favourably reviewed by many journals of high critical repute; and it received the additional compliment of being translated into German, and of being reprinted in the United States. Mr Clarke wrote many short stories, some of which displayed a graceful fancy, in combination with

stronger gifts; and most of these were afterwards issued in a collective shape. He composed or adapted three or four pantomimes and burlesques, and gave to the stage other dramatic productions with varying success. His gift of fluency, and his facility of literary expression, although valuable in themselves, were probably antagonistic to him as regards his making for himself the enduring reputation which might have been secured by works demanding greater deliberation of purpose and execution, more sustained thought, and steadier application. There was in his case a waste of intellectual power, owing to its distribution over a wide surface instead of its being concentrated on some important work and strengthened and disciplined by high endeavour. But this was attributable perhaps to temperament, and in part to the stress of circumstances. Five years ago he was appointed assistant librarian to the Public Library, and more recently he is understood to have been offered the librarianship of the Parliament Library, which he is reported to have declined, under the impression that he would succeed Mr Sheffield, on that gentleman's retirement from the post he has just vacated. There were, we believe, valid reasons for passing over the deceased; but there can be little doubt that the disappointment, coupled with other troubles to which we need not more specifically allude, preyed upon his mind, and accelerated the progress of the disease under which a constitution that was anything but robust has succumbed. Mr Clarke married in 1868 Miss Marian Dunn, daughter of the late comedian of that name, and leaves his widow and six children to deplore his untimely death. The announcement of Mr Clarke's decease will be received with a very general feeling of regret, and much sympathy will be felt for the unhappy lady who has suffered so sad and sudden a bereavement.'



Despite dismal, wet weather, the funeral was well attended. Elliott quotes McCrae's letter to Kendall: 'Nearly all the survivors of the old *Colonial Monthly* were there, including Capt Humphreys and myself.'

5 August 1881 *The Argus* reported: 'The funeral of Marcus Clarke took place yesterday, and was attended by a large number of friends. The funeral cortege left the deceased's house in Inkermann Street, St Kilda, at 10 o'clock, and included many private carriages and public vehicles. At Prince's bridge, and in Swanston Street, it was considerably lengthened, being there joined by members of the Yorick Club, of which Mr Clarke was the first hon. secretary, the officers of the Public Library, of which he was sub-librarian, and numbers of others. The procession continued its way to the Melbourne General Cemetery, where the remains were interred. The pall-bearers were Messrs J. J. Shillinglaw, Garnet Walch, R. P. Whitworth, W. Hepburn, F. F. Ballière, his Honour Judge Cope, Capt. Mandeville, and Mr R. Curtis. The funeral ceremony was conducted by the Rev. Canon Handfield, assisted by the Rev. R. Colonna Close, late rector of Toowong, Brisbane.

'It is no secret that the widow of Mr Marcus Clarke and his six children have been left utterly destitute, but the high respect in which this lady has always been held has called forth a great deal

of practical sympathy towards her. Among other expressions of this feeling, Mr J. C. Williamson has generously granted the use of the Opera house for a matinee, to take place next Tuesday afternoon, and already a very attractive programme has been sketched out. The performances will probably commence with the charming little domestic drama of "Kerry," in which Mr and Mrs Williamson will make their last appearance for the present in Melbourne. This will be followed by a miscellany, in which several well-known public favourites have most kindly expressed their readiness to take part; and an act of *Pinafore*, or *The Pirates*, will very likely complete the entertainment. The benefit will be managed by a committee of gentlemen, and the arrangements will be completed for engaging seats on Monday. We have already announced that M. Kowalski has very kindly determined to devote the proceeds of his first Exhibition concert to the assistance of Mrs Clarke, and we are now informed by him that the concert will take place on Saturday, the 13th inst, at the Exhibition building. Mr G. B. W. Lewis has also most liberally expressed his intention of similarly devoting Wednesday night at the Bijou Theatre to the benefit of Mrs Clarke. In short, as soon as it was known that help was needed, there was quite a competition among the benevolently disposed to co-operate in aiding to effect it.'

12 August 1881 *The Argus* announced the first of Kowalski's exhibition concerts, the proceeds going to Clarke's widow: 'Amongst the artists who will take part in the entertainment we find the name of Miss Kate Thayer, a young lady with a high soprano voice, who has quite recently arrived with the Wilhelm Concert Company from the United States. Miss Thayer is a near relative of the American poet H. W. Longfellow, and she brings with her the most flattering encomiums by the leading American journals. She will sing "Gli Angui d'Inferno," from *Il Flauto Magico* of Mozart, "Capriccioso" of Mattel and "We Banish Love," the last lines written by the late Marcus Clarke, the music composed by Kowalski.'

12 June 1885 Clarke's remains were removed to ground suitable for a memorial. On the anniversary of his death, 2 August 1898, a memorial by J. McCracken was unveiled: 'Erected by a few South Australians as a tribute to his genius.' On the east side was inscribed: 'Marcus Clarke, author, born 24th April 1846, died 2nd August 1881, "For the Term of His Natural Life." After life's fitful fever he sleeps well.' On the north side: 'And now comes the last scene of all and it is with a sorrowful heart that I pen these lines, for memory flies back to the bright days of our early friendship, when boys together we never found the longest day too long and whispered in mournful tones, "Ah! what might have been." But it was not to be, and I bow in silent submission to the omnipotent. Hamilton Mackinnon.' On the south side was added later: 'Also Marian his widow, youngest daughter of John Dunn (comedian) died 4th December 1914 aged 67 years. "A loving mother."'



12 August 1881 the Melbourne correspondent of the *Sydney Morning Herald* offered a less than charitable retrospective on Clarke: 'As soon as it was made known that Mrs Clarke and her six children had been left entirely destitute, a number of benevolent people set to work to raise

money for them. Accordingly three performances are already arranged to take place for their benefit, and other means are being taken to add to the fund. Everybody knows that this need ought never to have arisen and that if even ordinary thrift had been employed these poor creatures would now have been well provided for. I speak from an intimate knowledge of the circumstances of the late Mr Clarke, and I therefore assert that he had the amplest opportunity both of living in comfort and of saving money. No man connected with the profession of letters in this colony was ever more favourably circumstanced than he was, and yet he was always in debt, and he died insolvent; and his family are now the recipients of charity. I am the more emphatic, in making mention of these particulars, inasmuch as he was a good deal admired by some young men who have taken to writing as a means of livelihood, and who speak jauntily of the Bohemianism of letters, as if there were some charm in thriftlessness and debt, and as if it were romantic and not at all discreditable for a writing man to pay what he owed, and something heroic to be hunted by duns and fleeced by moneylenders, the while he himself lives a roistering life, and leaves his family half starved. So far as Mr Clarke's literary ability is concerned I offer no remark, although I have my own opinion thereon; but no sentimental regard for the *de mortuis* principle will prevent my protesting earnestly against the bad example he has set of neglecting those who ought to have been most dear to him. When misfortune comes from causes which could not be avoided, such as sickness or the bad faith of others, I trust I can feel and express commiseration. But there is no such explanation in Mr Clarke's case, as every truthful person who knows his circumstances must admit.'



Kendall, who had had his disputes with Clarke, was more generous in *The Sydney Mail*, 13 August 1881: 'One by one my friends are all wearing away. Harpur lies over there in Eurobodalla; Stenhouse rests in the shadow of the quiet willow; Gordon sleeps by the sea; and in that green lonely place where Love so often comes to sit and weep by Death is all that is left of the young man, with the kind face and good heart, whom we used to call Marcus. It moves me beyond expression to think of his strong spirit flickering out into the dark, after such a beginning of promise, such a life of effort, and such an exhibition of courage and patience under all sorts of trials.'

19 August 1881 Kendall wrote to William Henry: 'It appears to me that I shall never have time to write verse or prose. I am rarely well now; indeed it is pretty certain that my literary life has ended.'

20 August he wrote to McCrae from Cundletown: 'My life now is a rather trying one. Indeed, it is the same as a blackfellow's. I am always on the move: hence there is no leisure for literature. Indeed my literary career has closed.'

'In future, your letters had better be addressed to the Department of Mines, Sydney. I shall always be rejoiced to see your familiar handwriting; but you may have to wait months for my answers.'

‘The death of poor Clarke was a great blow to me. Only four months ago, I received a genial letter from him. I published a short prose “In Memoriam” in *The Sydney Mail*; and another in verse has been sent to *The Bulletin*. Clarke, like the rest of us, had his failings; but at the bottom, he was all gold. I intend to do my best here for the unhappy widow.

‘Remember me to the mournful remnant of the old crowd.’

He added a postscript: ‘I am very tired.’

Kendall was increasingly unwell. Most of September he spent at his home, seriously ill. 5 October 1881 he wrote to McCrae from Laurieton: ‘Your description of poor Clarke’s deathbed is very terrible. How did he manage to lose his billet? The Melbourne correspondent of the *Sydney Morning Herald* (James Smith, I think) made a cowardly attack upon him in that paper. I am sorry you did not see my “In Memoriam.”

‘The *Sydney Bulletin* is the most successful paper of its kind that has ever been issued in this colony. It is very clever, and the flavour of scandal running through it makes it sell ...

‘I suppose you saw poor Clarke’s article on Stephens and myself. Clarke was rather hard on the Queensland man.

‘It is so cold here that I must pull up. I can hardly move the pen.’

It was Kendall’s last letter to McCrae.



Kendall’s elegy for Clarke appeared in *The Bulletin*, 3 September 1881.

In Memoriam – Marcus Clarke

The night wind sobs on cliffs austere,
 Where gleams by fits the wintry star;
 And in the wild dumb woods I hear
 A moaning harbour bar.

The branch and leaf are very still;
 But now the great grave dark has grown,
 The torrent in the harsh sea-hill
 Sends forth a deeper tone.

Here sitting by a dying flame
 I cannot choose but think in grief
 Of Harpur, whose unhappy name
 Is as an autumn leaf.

And domed by purer breaths of blue,
 Afar from folds of forest dark,
 I see the eyes that once I knew –
 The eyes of Marcus Clarke.

Their clear, bright beauty shines apace
 But sunny dreams in shadow end.
 The sods have hid the faded face
 Of my heroic friend.

He sleeps where winds of evening pass –
 Where water songs are soft and low
 Upon his grave the tender grass
 Has not had time to grow.

Few knew the cross he had to bear
 And moan beneath from day to day,
 His were the bitter hours that wear
 The human heart away –

The laurels in the pit were won;
 He had to take the lot austere
 That ever seems to wait upon
 The man of letters here.

He toiled for love, unwatched, unseen,
 And fought, his troubles band by band;
 Till, like a friend of gentle mien,
 Death took him by the hand.

He rests in peace. No grasping thief
 Of hope and health can steal away
 The beauty of the flower and leaf
 Upon his tomb today.

So let him sleep, whose life was hard!
 And may they place beyond the wave
 The tender rose of my regard
 Upon his tranquil grave.



October 1881 *The Mystery of Major Molineux and Human Repetends* by Marcus Clarke was published by Cameron, Laing & Co. in Melbourne. The title page announced that the publishers offered half the profits to Clarke's widow, Marian. It was dedicated, 'by the express wish of the late Marcus Clarke,, to Dr Patrick Moloney.

R. P. Whitworth contributed a preface, dated 19 August, reflecting on 'the singular and contradictory elements in the character of this gifted man': 'To the outside world Marcus Clarke seemed cold, caustic, cynical, unapproachable, ever ready with a biting remark or a stinging repartee, more ready to make and to keep enemies than friends, reckless in his habits, and Bohemian in his proclivities. Those within the pale of his intimate friendship knew him better; caustic he was sometimes, and cynical always; but beneath all there beat a heart of gold – a heart tender and pitiful as a woman's. Impatient of wrong, a thorough and inveterate hater of sham and pretentiousness, a fearless and outspoken advocate of what he thought was right and true, and generous – yes, generous to a fault, as some of those who, perchance, would be ready enough to cast a stone at his memory know well enough. Bohemian, perhaps, but a gentleman by birth and instinct. Improvident it may be – ah, well-a-day, he had a long, sore battle to fight, and improvidence is a very easy charge to make, particularly against one to whom "business" was a mathematical ∞ – an unknown quantity.

'His conversational powers were unbounded, and founded on an innate knowledge of the inner workings of human nature, remarkable alike for their perspicuity and brilliancy. It was not the meretricious glitter of fireworks, but keen and incisive lightning that flashed around you. Of his talents as a man of letters it is hardly necessary to speak, inasmuch as he was recognized as *facile princeps* amongst the *litterateurs* of Australia.'



Clarke left a personal estate of £99. 18s. 4d., with debit balance of 4s. 4d, according to probate in the Public Record Office, Melbourne. McLaren records that a subscription list to raise funds for Mrs Clarke and the six children was established. Of the sixty-nine contributors, Waxman the money-lender's donation of £10 was the largest.

7 December 1881 the *Launceston Examiner* reported that the Marcus Clarke fund, with H. G. Turner as treasurer, had accumulated £997 15s. 10d. By 4 March 1882, the *Northern Territory Times* reported, it had reached £1040. Three times the amount Clarke had owed Waxman, that led to his bankruptcy.

The sniping at Clarke continued. 10 January 1882 *The Argus* noticed the current issue of the *Melbourne Review*: 'The present number, which is rather above the recent average, opens with an indulgent notice of the career and works of the late Mr Marcus Clarke, by Mr H. G. Turner, in which the writer palliates the personal shortcomings of his subject, and greatly exaggerates his merits as an author.'



3 August 1881 Swan wrote to Shillinglaw suggesting that literary friends should publish a book to assist Clarke's widow. In September 1881 a note in the *Australian Journal* referred to a memorial volume for Marcus Clarke to be edited by G. A. Walstab, Garnet Walch and R. P. Whitworth. In 1884 *The Marcus Clarke Memorial Volume Containing Selections from the writings of Marcus Clarke*, compiled and edited by Hamilton Mackinnon, was published by Cameron Laing, & Co. Mackinnon was Marian Clarke's agent in dealing with the Clarke copyrights, and he negotiated with Bentley's in London, and with Melbourne publishers from February 1882 until his death from a shooting accident in 1897, fooling around with a gun with a friend at his lodgings in Marian Clarke's house.

In 1886 Mackinnon edited a further collection of four stories, *Sensational Tales* by the late Marcus Clarke, printed by McCarron Bird & Co. A flyer announced: 'Mrs Marcus Clarke respectfully informs the public that she alone has the above book for sale in her office, Old City Court buildings, Little Collins Street.' McLaren notes: 'She took a stand in the Victorian Court of the Centennial International Exhibition in Melbourne in 1888 to display her husband's books and manuscripts.'

Demand for *His Natural Life* increased with the publicity provided by numerous theatrical adaptations that began to appear from 1886, notably the versions produced by Inigo Tyrrell Weekes, by George Leitch and, for Alfred Dampier's company, by Thomas Walker. Catherine Bond has explored the copyright and financial ramifications of these adaptations in "'The play goes on eternally': Copyright, Marcus Clarke's heirs and *His Natural Life* as play and film'. She records how the three producers 'became involved in an inter-colonial war of words with respect to dramatizations of *His Natural Life*. Each claimed that his version was authorized by Marian Clarke and that he was paying her for the privilege. However, as "authorization" for the purposes of dramatization was not legally required, it appears that the strategy of all three producers was to use Marian, in the role of Marcus Clarke's impoverished widow, for reputational and publicity purposes.'

According to *The Age*, 22 July 1886, the dramatic rights to the novel had been sold to Leitch, but Marian Clarke denied having received royalties. Bond writes: 'Weekes responded to the notice claiming that he held a current copyright and intended "to pay Mrs Marcus Clarke a royalty out of all proceeds, and have so informed her."' *The Age* then printed a second letter by Weekes five days later, where Weekes ... stated that he was "prepared to give the whole of my profits (save ... expenses) to the deceased litterateur's widow and family." Perhaps oddly, a letter from "Rufus Dawes" (the fictional protagonist in *His Natural Life*) was published directly underneath that penned by Weekes, criticizing that author on the basis that had any injunction been granted against the performance of Leitch's version, such action would have caused "pecuniary loss to the lady who alone has the equitable right to her late husband's brains."

'Concurrent to these publications, the Sydney edition of *The Bulletin* reported that Dampier (in addition to George Darrell, who was rumoured to have performed *His Natural Life* in New Zealand) had [been] playing *His Natural Life* without duly rewarding the claim of the widow and

children of the late Marcus Clarke, the author.” However, *The Bulletin* defended Dampier, whose version was playing in Sydney, stating that he had been paying Marian a per-performance payment “although not in any way bound by law to do so.” Dampier later wrote that he had sent Marian Clarke a royalty cheque of £12 for 12 performances and that he had “never intended to use ... *His Natural Life* without taking into consideration the moral claim of the author’s widow to a royalty.”⁴

There were further dramatizations by W. E. Baker, William South, Edmund Duggan, Dan Barry, W. H. Horton, Laurence Dunbar, and Frank Gerald and Stirling Duff. It was also dramatized in England, adapted by James J. McCloskey, and C. A. Clarke and Rollo Balmain, and in the USA as *Convict 1240* by John A. Stevens (1885) and *A Great Wrong Righted* (1886).

In 1890 Mackinnon edited *The Austral Edition of the Selected Works of Marcus Clarke*, absorbing the material from his two previous selections, and adding more to make a five hundred page volume. The first part of the *Austral Edition* was later re-issued as *Australian Tales* (A. W. Bruce, Melbourne, 1896), and as *Australian Tales of the Bush* (George Robertson, 1897). The fifth part, which reprinted *Old Tales of a Young Country* together with some other historical pieces, was re-issued in England as *Stories of Australia in the Early Days* (Hutchinson, London, 1897). Vetch quotes a letter Gavan Duffy wrote from Nice to Sir Andrew Clarke, 17 March 1899, St Patrick’s Day: ‘Has anything ever been done to bring out an English edition of Marcus Clarke’s writings? ... He was a man of undoubted genius.’ Something had been done, and there were English editions of ‘*Twixt Shadow and Shine* (Swann Sonnenschein, 1893), *Chidiack Tichbourne* (Eden Remington, 1893) and *Long Odds*, re-titled *Heavy Odds* (Hutchinson, London; J. P. Lippincott, Philadelphia, 1896).

His Natural Life, re-titled *For the Term of His Natural Life* in 1882, was reprinted and reissued by numerous English publishers, including Macmillan, who took over Richard Bentley in 1897, Ward Lock, Collins in their Collins Classics series, Oxford University Press in their World’s Classics series, and Penguin. In the USA further editions appeared in 1881 in the Lakeside series published by Donnelly Lloyd, the Seaside Library from Charles Munro, the *New York Tribune* Library of Tribune Extras, and from Henneberry, E. A. Weekes, and Laird and Lee.

His Natural Life was filmed in 1908 by Charles MacMahon and E. J. Carroll, in 1911 by Alfred Rolfe, and in 1927 by Norman Dawn, with Lady Devine played by Clarke’s younger daughter Ethel Marian, who had by now acquired the cinematographic rights to the novel, Catherine Bond establishes in “‘The play goes on eternally’”. It was adapted for television in 1982. In 1978 Sidney Nolan executed thirty-one crayon-pastel drawings illustrating the novel. A graphic novel version by Peter Foster was published in 1986.



Early in 1882 Charles Harpur’s widow asked Kendall if he would edit a collection of her husband’s poetry. 22 March he declined the request through pressure of work and ill health: ‘When I tell you that my official duties compel me to travel all over the colony, and that I have

not seen my home for the last six months, you will hardly wonder at what may have appeared to you my strange silence. One of my children died in January last; but I was far away.

‘I need hardly say that I deeply reverence your noble devotion to your gifted husband. I wish to God it were in my power to edit his wonderful poems. I am so rushed with work that Sunday is no Sunday to me.’

He offered some practical advice on publishing the book, and concluded: ‘You will be sorry to hear that, for some time, I have been in very delicate health. It is not at all improbable that before the year be out, I shall see Charles.’

Nonetheless, a Harpur volume was under way and Kendall was involved. Parkes had approached George Robertson who replied, 11 May 1881, with financial estimates, commenting: ‘I think the association of Mr Kendall’s name with the book would not be of any advantage – perhaps the reverse.’

Holroyd notes: ‘A printed folder attached to the Parkes–Robertson correspondence in Mitchell Library reads:

‘Charles Harpur’s Poems

‘Subscriptions are hereby asked in aid of a projected volume of the late Charles Harpur’s Poems. It is not necessary to say who Charles Harpur was. He was the first and greatest of Australian Poets; and the publication now in view would not only add lustre to our young literature, it would also shed glory on our National life. It is emphatically the duty of Australia to rescue the works of this masculine poet from oblivion.

‘Henry Kendall.’



Frederick Kendall recalled in ‘Henry Kendall at Cundle Town, 1881’: ‘In June, 1881, my father left on his first official journey north, to the Richmond River, returning to Cundle in October. He left home for the last time for Sydney in November and I never saw him thereafter. After a time in Sydney he went on his first western inspection, to the Lachlan. On this and other trips he rode hundreds of miles, as his diary (in my possession) shows, in all weathers. The work was really too much for him and he fell ill and had to fall back on Sydney in April, 1882.

‘My mother rushed down from Cundle to nurse him, but he pluckily recovered and faced another winter journey, this time accompanied by George Fagan, an old friend, for whose expenses my mother arranged. This gentleman left him at Waroo, on the Lachlan, in May, apparently in fair health, but my father, through travelling in wet cloths, contracted a severe chill and returned to Wagga on the 5th of June. He collapsed there and sent a wire to Sydney for help. George Fagan found him and brought him to Sydney, where, on the 14th of June, he entered St Vincent’s hospital. Here my mother, hastily summoned from her family at Cundle, tended him and shared his private ward for five weeks.’

For the last week he was moved to the Fagans’ house in Redfern and nursed by Charlotte. He was suffering from tuberculosis, which killed his father, brother and one sister. 1 August 1882,

Henry Kendall died, a day short of a year after Marcus Clarke died. He was forty-three years old. Charlotte wrote to Kendall's uncle Thomas, 9 August: 'About twenty minutes before he died he asked me for a drink of the tea and he drank water, then champagne, and sank back on his pillow. The day he died he said to me, "Lottie, I shall live to the first of the month so you will get the salary," he said. With his right hand resting on his face he passed away. To the last his only thought was that he had not left me and my little ones unprovided for.'

Charlotte wrote to Sutherland, 6 September 1882: 'poor fellow, he could not help his failing, although his death was not hastened by that cause; if he had resigned his position a few months ago he would, I am sure, be alive now, as he was physically unfitted for it.'

4 August the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported: 'The mortal remains of Henry Clarence Kendall were buried yesterday afternoon in the Waverley Cemetery, the interment being witnessed by some of the dead poet's closest friends, and a number of gentlemen who knew him only through his poems, and even thus had grown to love him. The funeral procession moved from Mr William Fagan's residence, 137 Bourke Street, and here a few friends were permitted to take a last look at the dead face before the coffin was screwed down. That face, placid and peaceful, reposed amid a bed of deep rich moss, feathery ferns and a few wax-like flowers, all the tribute of loving hearts; and the poet's grave is situated in the most sheltered nook of that swelling upland which looks out upon the Pacific Ocean. A space sufficiently large has been bought to allow the erection of a monument should such a course be decided upon. The burial service was read by the Rev. Mr Mitchell, of Waverley, and at its conclusion, as the first sounds of earth dropping into the grave were heard, a lady who seemed to be merely a chance visitor, advanced and showered upon the coffin a profusion of the lovely wild flowers which flourish so luxuriantly near at hand.'

In his prefatory note to Kendall's *Poems* in 1886, Philip J. Holdsworth recalled: 'He was buried by a handful of mourners (twenty was the full total).' Holdsworth commented in a lecture at the School of Arts, reported in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 16 August 1882: 'Alluding to the handful of mourners who followed the remains, he said that had the dead poet been but a cricketer ... or had he been notable by reason of any excellence in athletics, his funeral might have been a colossal one; but as he was merely a poet, merely a literary man, merely a lyrical genius, he had but a scanty following.'

A. G. Stephens recorded in 'Kendalliana – IV' in *The Bulletin*, 16 July 1930: 'Fifteen vehicles followed his hearse to the grave. Victor Daley and Richmond Thatcher, another Bohemian of the epoch, walked to Waverley, taking a stimulating drink at several public houses on the road. At the second or third house the beer was particularly good, and Thatcher paused and held up his Pewter to Daley: "Ah, Victor, if poor Harry were here now! How he would enjoy a drop of this!"

'At the grave Daley met P. J. Holdsworth, a rarely remembered poet, one of Kendall's most faithful and helpful friends.

"Ah, Victor," said Holdsworth, with tears in his eyes, "Harpur's gone! Deniehy's gone! There are only you and I now."

In his *Bulletin* diary Stephens credits the account to Victor Daley. Hugh McCrae recorded in *The Bulletin*, 25 June 1930: 'Victor Daley himself told me that he had never known Kendall, but that he had attended his funeral.'

The Sydney *Evening News* reported, 4 August 1882: 'Such an occasion should have called forth the sorrow and sympathy of the nation, for the loss is a national one. In the days to come it will be a matter of regret that on August 3 1882, when the last remains of Henry Kendall were being committed to the tomb, only twenty citizens could be found to stand by the open grave, while dust was cast upon the coffin that contained the mortal part of the most gifted poet who ever graced the pages of Southern literature.'

Holdsworth and Sheridan Moore are listed as amongst the twenty mourners present but not Daley or Thatcher. James Tyrrell reflected: 'Maybe, however, Holdsworth made the remark at Richmond Thatcher's Bulletin Hotel at 65 Castlereagh Street, Sydney, where Thatcher, who was a publican as well as a man of letters, entertained the literary lights of the day.'

John Henniker Heaton provided a simple, wooden monument over the grave.



The Sydney *Morning Herald* published a tribute, 2 August 1882: 'This sad event creates a great gap in Australian literature that we have little hope of seeing quickly filled. Rhymsters we have in shoals, but a true poet, such as Kendall was, comes to us seldom, and unhappily does not tarry long. He has been ungrudgingly recognized as an exponent of the poetic sentiment of those young communities – as one who had communed with the spirits of our forests and hills and plains, and had been gifted with the power of interpreting the voice of nature in smooth, soft measures, and depicting her moods in brilliant imagery ... With the exception, perhaps, of Adam Lindsay Gordon, there is no poetic writer whose works breathe a purer Australian spirit, or are more deeply marked with the influence of the life and scenes of those lands. His poems gave evidence of close acquaintance with the "sweet singers" of other countries, but in and throughout all he betrayed the influence of his surroundings in his lonely forest homes, where he was frequently a self-condemned exile from the everyday world ...

'Mr Kendall's career was chequered and gloomy and overshadowed by great troubles, of which he may have been partly the victim and partly the creator, but the few who gained an insight into his inner life knew that he often went out into the wilderness and wrestled terribly with his temper in a mental and physical struggle, of which, happily, few knew the terrors. His work was tinged with the sorrow of his life.'

9 August *The Brisbane Courier* published an obituary: 'One cannot think of the life and the death of poor Kendall without a pang of sympathetic sorrow ... He was no man's enemy but his own, and it is no exaggeration to say that a profound feeling of pity has been excited by his premature decease. The immediate cause of his death was consumption brought on by exposure and neglect and excess. It was hoped that his recent appointment as inspector of forests would have been the beginning of a new life, but those who saw his poor wan face, the attenuated frame,

and the sunken eye which once beamed so brightly, must have felt satisfied that the end was not far off. Latterly he was but the ghost of his former self physically, while intellectually his decline can be distinctly traced from a period of something like half a score of years back.'

The Argus followed, 12 August: 'We have just lost our principal native poet. Henry Kendall has died prematurely of a broken constitution. Charity bids us speak lightly of the frailties of those who have fallen. Kendall never wanted for sympathizers and helpers, but he made it difficult for his friends to carry out their wishes. Sir Henry Parkes gave him the post of inspector of forests, which was the second time he had been tried in the civil service. In itself, the appointment was a bad one, but the people did not grumble, because they understood that it was one poet trying to help another. We cannot pretend that Mr Kendall was a great poet, but he was a very mellifluous versifier, and he had caught the spirit of Australian life and scenery. It was the local colouring he could give to his lines which endeared him very largely to the native population.'

Phillip Holdsworth wrote a tribute and assessment of his poetry, published in the *Burra Record*, 20 October 1882: 'Upon the career of Henry Kendall the stamp of sorrow has been set. With a noble hearted wife and beautiful children, he possessed at least one of the main elements of social happiness. But an overwhelming gloom dominated him perpetually. His songs are steeped in an element of the sorrowful ... Nor was that gloom produced, in the main, by the failing which a portion of the press has so unnecessarily accentuated. Those who knew the inner life of Henry Kendall as well as the present writer did, can certify that family troubles formed a reason sufficiently valid to account for most of his sorrow. In his domestic relations, he had every blessing that a devoted wife and children can give. But, outside that – and the veil need be lifted no further – he incurred perplexities which weighed heavily upon his soul ... He reposes at Waverley Cemetery, within sound and sight of the inimitable sea, lulled – if lulling be needed after a life's unrest – by the voice of the many sounding surge. "Give me a drink from the sea," he said, in one of those half-delirious moments that preceded death. And, pursuant to his last request, he sleeps by the sea. Not far removed from him, is the grave of Samuel Bennett, who was ever a veritable friend to the vanished singer.'

The Argus reported, 14 December 1882: 'The fund that is being raised to assist the widow and family of the late Henry Kendall now amounts to £700. It is expected that £1,000 will be raised.'

Kendall's widow Charlotte collaborated with Alexander Sutherland in preparing a selected *Poems of Henry Kendall* with a prefatory note by Philip J. Holdsworth. George Robertson published it in 1886, followed in 1890 with an expanded edition, *Poems of Henry Clarence Kendall* edited with a memoir by Alexander Sutherland, and in 1903 a revised and enlarged edition, edited with memoir by Frederick C. Kendall. In 1897 Francis Palgrave included Kendall's 'Orara' and 'After Many Years' in the second series of *The Golden Treasury*, an immensely influential English anthology, and Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch included 'Mooni' in *The Oxford Book of English Verse* in 1939.

In 1884 Louisa Lawson came to Sydney. She is said to have named her son Henry after Kendall, envisaging a literary destiny for him. A. G. Stephens recorded in 'Kendalliana – IV' in *The Bulletin*, 16 July 1930: 'When she had found lodgings, and settled her brood temporarily, the next thing she did was to walk out to Waverley cemetery and worship at Kendall's grave. She found a neglected weed-grown plot, with a small wooden cross upon which hung a sagging wreath, and all her soul was aflame with indignation.

'She went to the *Town and Country Journal* – an influential paper in 1884 – with a letter of complaint and remonstrance. The editor took fire from her flame, and sent out a designer who made a sketch of the neglected grave. This was engraved and printed, with Louisa's appeal. It made some stir; and Louisa went around raising funds for a monument. Dr Badham, of the university, delivered a lecture for her; Gerald Massey, a visiting English poet, delivered another. Progress was slow; the £1,200 subscription had exhausted public interest in Kendall. Louis kept on preaching and collecting with tireless enthusiasm. Gradually the "heads" took interest, and W. B. Dalley was captured. A substantial committee was formed; the monument was ordered; and in 1886 it was erected and unveiled with public ceremony by Governor Carrington.

'Louisa Lawson wasn't invited to the ceremony; unfortunately the committee had forgotten her.

'The committee met to decide the inscription on the monument, and chose, after deliberation, the closing lines of Shelley's lamenting poem for Keats: -

'Surely he takes his fill

'Of deep and liquid rest, forgetful of all ill.

'Kendall's convivial habits were still strongly remembered by the public mind, and Dalley suggested a doubt that the reference to "liquid rest" was perhaps a little too appropriate. Since Shelley uses the word in the classical sense of clear, pellucid, the objection was over-ruled.'

Though according to Frederick Kendall in the introduction to his father's *Poems* the inscription was 'the graceful suggestion of the late W. B. Dalley, an old friend'.

A drawing of the ceremony by W. H. Hunt appeared in the *Illustrated Sydney News*, 24 December 1886.

In 1940 an Art Deco style seat in the Sydney Botanical Garden was commissioned in memory of Kendall at the bequest of Agnes Hamilton-Grey. Designed by Wilfred Rhodes with a carving of winged horses by L. Bicego it is near the south-east entrance.



Julian Tenison Woods was buried in the same cemetery in October 1889. Paul Gardiner quotes Mary MacKillop from her unpublished *Life of the Rev. J. E. T. Woods*: 'How appropriate is the last resting place of the gentle learned priest and naturalist! Crowned with the Cross, beneath the statue of the "Sweet Mother" whom he had so tenderly loved, – a little child in the next grave, – Australia's gifted son Deniehy at his feet, – the "Silver-tongued" Dalley close by, – typifying all that during life had most delighted him – Devotion, innocence and intellect!

‘There, on the hill side, overlooking the Pacific, which far below washes the rocky cemetery, and murmurs a perpetual requiem in its own soul-stirring music, the mortal remains of Father J. E. Tenison Woods await the Resurrection.

‘May he rest in peace. Amen.’

Joseph Sheridan Moore was buried in the same cemetery in 1891.

Louisa Lawson purchased the adjacent burial plot to Kendall’s grave, and her son Henry Lawson was buried there in 1922. The ashes of Lawson’s estranged wife Bertha were added in 1957.

Marian Clarke died 4 December 1914 aged sixty-seven. Margaret Gordon, now Margaret Low, died in November 1919 aged seventy-four, and Peter Low died seven years later at eighty-two. Charlotte Kendall died 19 October 1924.

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(for full titles of works see the bibliography below)

Acknowledgements

Acknowledgement is gratefully made to Dr Hugh Anderson for permission to quote from *The Last Letters 1868-1870 Adam Lindsay Gordon to John Riddoch*, to Professor Mark Finnane and the National Library of Australia for permission to quote from *'The Difficulties of My Position': the diaries of prison governor John Buckley Castieau, 1855-1884*, to Paul de Serville for permission to quote from his work on Captain Standish's diaries, and to the following libraries to quote from materials held in their collections: Rare Book and Special Collections, Fisher Library, University of Sydney; Trinity College Archives, University of Melbourne; National Library of Australia; Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales; State Library of South Australia; Australian Manuscripts Collection, State Library of Victoria; and the on-line search facilities of Trove and Picture Australia. The three bibliographies by Ian F. McLaren, *Marcus Clarke*, *Adam Lindsay Gordon* and *Henry Kendall* have been invaluable for locating and documenting the letters, manuscripts, newspapers, journals and books drawn on from these and other collections. I am grateful to the following for assistance and information: the Adam Lindsay Gordon Commemorative Committee, the Clarence River Historical Society, John Adams, Deborah Adamson, Hugh Anderson, Jim Berrow, Brian Bingley, Neil Boness, Sandra Burt, Bruce Clunies Ross, Peter Corris, Richard Crabtree, Victor Crittenden, Lorraine Day, Paul de Serville, Phillip Edmonds, Marianne Ehrhardt, Mark Finnane, Ross Fitzgerald, Laurie Hergenhan, Susan Hall, Carl Harrison-Ford, Carol Hetherington, Brian Kiernan, Kevin Leamon, Frank Mack, Hazel Nsair, Nicholas Pounder, Richard Ratajczak, Lucy Shedden, Ken Stewart, Matthew Stuckings, Kelsey Thornton, Nick Walker, Robert Yeo, and Dorothea Zarins.

Abbreviations

AE: The Austral Edition of the Selected Works of Marcus Clarke, ed Hamilton Mackinnon

ALG: Adam Lindsay Gordon

AT: Marcus Clarke, *Australian Tales*

CC: A Colonial City: High and Low Life; Selected Journalism of Marcus Clarke, ed L. T. Hergenhan

HK: Henry Kendall

HNL: His Natural Life

MC: Marcus Clarke

ML: Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales

MV: The Marcus Clarke Memorial Volume, ed Hamilton Mackinnon

NLA: National Library of Australia

SLV: State Library of Victoria

ST: Marcus Clarke, *Stories*

Clarke: MC correspondence, MC Papers, State Library of Victoria, MS 822 and Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW, *Marcus Clarke papers, ca. 1865–1928*, call no ML MSS 55; *Felix and Felicitas* papers, correspondence with Rose Lewis, ML MSS 55/1–2, extracts in Elliott, *Marcus Clarke*; MC correspondence with Bentley's, Bentley correspondence from the British Library, University of Southern California library,

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